DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 265 PS 021 673

AUTHOR Podmore, Valerie N., Ed.
TITLE What Is Government's Role in Early Childhood Education? Papers Presented at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research Invitational Seminar (February 23, 1993).
INSTITUTION New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-908916-49-3
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 124p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Early Childhood Education; Educational Finance; Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; Elementary School Curriculum; *Financial Support; Foreign Countries; *Government Role; *Government School Relationship; Indigenous Populations; *Role of Education
IDENTIFIERS *New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the role of the federal government in maintaining quality in early childhood education, these proceedings present introductory remarks followed by 10 seminar papers: (1) "The Role of Government in Early Childhood: Support and Advice for Serving Parents and Communities," (Pamela Kennedy); (2) "What Is the Government's Role in Early Childhood Education? Education Review Office and the Early Childhood Sector," (Jeanette Schollum); (3) "Back, Against the Wall. Staffing and the Quality of Early Childhood Education: The Impact of Government Policy," (Linda Mitchell); (4) "Government's Role in the Funding of the Kohanga Reo," (Peggy Luke-Ngaheke); (5) "The Role of Government in Early Childhood Curriculum in Aotearoa-New Zealand," (Margaret Carr and Helen May); (6) "What Can the North American Experience Teach Us in the 1990s?" (Heather McDonald); (7) "Government's Role in Early Childhood Education: A Comparative Perspective from Western Australia," (Joy Cullen); (8) "Government's Role in Early Childhood and the First Years of School," (Helen Duncan); (9) "The Role of the Church and Government in Promoting Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa," (Fereni Pepe Ete); and (10) "Provision, Accountability and Quality: Let's Not Undervalue Children," (Rahera Barrett Douglas). (BCY)

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What is Government's Role in Early Childhood Education?

Papers Presented at the 1993 NZCER Invitational Seminar

Edited by Valerie N. Podmore

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New Zealand Council for Educational Research

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Edited by Valerie N. Podmore

Sponsorship from the New Zealand Association for Research in Education is gratefully acknowledged

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Wellington, 1993

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
P.O. Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

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ISBN 0-908916-49-3

Distributed by NZCER Distribution Services
Box 3237
Wellington

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BACKGROUND

The NZCER early childhood seminars are planned as occasions where people with an interest in early childhood research, policies, and practices are able to share their knowledge and concerns. This fifth annual NZCER early childhood seminar was initiated in response to a request from the early childhood advisory group which met in Dunedin at the Early Childhood Convention in December 1991.

Cathy Wylie and I represented NZCER at the meeting of the advisory group in Dunedin, Margery Renwick and Cathy Wylie planned the seminar programme, and from November 1992 onwards I co-ordinated the seminar arrangements. We were pleased to receive financial support for the seminar from the New Zealand Association for Research in Education. Widespread interest was expressed in the seminar, which was over-subscribed. We sincerely regret that we were unable to accommodate everyone who wished to attend.

On the morning of the seminar, fog descended over the city, leading to an untimely closure of the Wellington airport. This meant that a number of the registered participants, and several speakers, were prevented from arriving at the seminar. We appreciated the co-operation and flexibility of the speakers who did arrive, as considerable rescheduling of the papers was necessary. We also appreciated the helpful communication received from the office of the Minister of Education and from that of the Opposition Spokesperson on Education. Although the Minister of Education, Dr the Hon. Lockwood Smith, was unable to reach Wellington, we appreciated receiving a copy of his paper at the seminar. The Opposition Spokesperson on Education, the Hon. Margaret Austin, was also unable to reach Wellington. Her paper was read by Steve Maharey, M.P., who arrived at the seminar during the afternoon after some re-routing of his travel arrangements.

Although this publication is a comprehensive compilation of the seminar papers, the actual order in which the papers were presented was somewhat different on the day. These proceedings include all of the papers prepared for the seminar, and also a copy of a letter subsequently sent to the Minister of Education. The letter, which summarises the issues raised during the plenary session, was prepared at the request of the seminar participants.

Valerie N. Podmore

NZCER

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Tuesday 23 February, 1993

A seminar organized by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Sponsorship from the New Zealand Association for Research in Education is acknowledged gratefully

Programme

9.15 a.m.	Mihi
9.30 a.m.	Hon. Margaret Austin, Opposition Spokesperson on Education
10.00 a.m	Dr the Hon. Lockwood Smith, Minister of Education
CHAIR:	Anne Meade

10.30 a.m.	Refreshments

10.45 a.m.	Early Childhood Development Unit: Pamela Kennedy *Support and Advice for Serving Parents and Communities*
	Education Review Office: Jeanette Schollum *ERO and the Early Childhood Sector*
	Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa: Linda Mitchell *Staffing and the Quality of Early Childhood Services: The Impact of Government Policy*
	Discussion/Questions to Panel
CHAIR:	Val Podmore
11.45 a.m.	Te Kohanga Reo Trust: Peggy Luke-Ngaheke *Government's Role in the Funding of the Kohanga Reo*

12.30 p.m.	Lunch

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1 p.m.	Margaret Carr and Helen May, University of Waikato *The Role of Government in Defining Curriculum Development in Aotearoa - New Zealand*
1.35 p.m.	Heather McDonald, Ministry of Women's Affairs *What Can the North American Experience Teach Us in the 1990s?*

2.10 p.m.	Joy Cullen, Massey University *Government's Role in Early Childhood Education: A Comparative Perspective from Western Australia*
	Helen Duncan, NZEI - Discussant *Government's Role in Early Childhood and the First Years of School*
2.45 p.m.	Fereni Ete, Pacific Island Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa *The Role of the Church and Government in Promoting Early Childhood Education in New Zealand*
CHAIR:	Margery Renwick
3 p.m.	Plenary Session
CHAIR:	Cathy Wylie
4.30 p.m.	Close

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

NZCER's Early Childhood Seminar, 23 February 1993

LIST OF REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS

Anne Smith, Education Department, University of Otago
Rosemary Renwick, Ministry of Education
Harvey McQueen, New Zealand Council for Teacher Education
Marilyn Stevens, Lower Hutt Free Kindergarten Association
Jo-Anne Stead, Lower Hutt Free Kindergarten Association
Caryl-Louise Robinson, Early Childhood Development Unit
Jo Kelly, Early Childhood Development Unit
Judy Baker, Early Childhood Development Unit
Gloria Culley, Early Childhood Development Unit
Kathryn Palmer, Early Childhood Development Unit
Glennie Oborn, Kindercare Learning Centres
Lorraine McLeod, Kindercare Learning Centres
Kerry Cooke, Palmerston North College of Education
Anne Hodren, Royal New Zealand Plunket Society
Carol Garden, Ministry of Education
Cushla Scrivens, ASTU, Palmerston North College of Education
Pam Molony, Barnados NZ
Anne Wilks, Palmerston North College of Education
Lynda Cotter, East Coast Region Senior Teacher Management
Elizabeth Lane, East Coast Region Senior Teacher Management
Judith Loveridge, Education Department, Massey University
Kay Gut, South Taranaki Free Kindergarten Association
Simon Easton, South Taranaki Free Kindergarten Association
Sue Patrick, Wairarapa Free Kindergarten Association
Kathy Fraser, Ruahine Kindergarten Assoc., Palmerston North
Kath Wood, Ruahine Kindergarten Association, Palmerston North
Liz Leong, Ruahine Kindergarten Association, Palmerston North
Sue Herlock, Palmerston North College of Education
Barbara Jordan, Palmerston North College of Education
Barbara Hutchinson, Blenheim Kindergarten
Maureen Wright, Redwoodtown Kindergarten, Blenheim
Prue Blythe, Wellington Kindergarten Association
Mary Wood, Correspondence School
Miriam MacPherson, Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa
Olive Hawira, Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa
Jenny Varney, Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa
Bill Campbell, NZ Free Kindergarten Union Inc.
Hilda Colgan, North Taranaki Free Kindergarten Association
Juliet Ormrod, North Taranaki Kindergarten Association
Pat Irvine, Dunedin College of Education
Lyn Foote, Dunedin College of Education
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Jane Couch, NZ Playcentre Federation
Geraldine Enersen, Marlborough Free Kindergarten Association
Jenny Young-Loveridge, University of Waikato
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Sarah Farquhar, Wellington College of Education
Rosalind Vercoe, Education Review Office
Gwen de Lima, Barnardos, Wellington Region
Elizabeth Uttley, Barnardos, Wellington Region
Lorraine Beale, Heretaunga Kindergarten Association
Helen Angel, Canterbury Westland Free Kindergarten Association
Ewen Stewart, Auckland Kindergarten Association
Kenda Kittelty, Wellington College of Education
Feaua'i Burgess, Wellington College of Education
Ann Dickason, Ministry of Education
Pauline McLeod, Ministry of Education
Linda Boyd, NZFKU/Christchurch College of Education
Steve Maharey, M.P.
Robin Houlker, Auckland College of Education
Rahera Barrett Douglas, Maori Women's Welfare League
Anne Hendricks, Victoria University of Wellington

NZCER

Anne Meade
Val Podmore
Margery Renwick
Cathy Wylie
Jacky Burgon

Speakers

Hon. Margaret Austin, Opposition Spokesperson on Education
Dr the Hon. Lockwood Smith, Minister of Education
Pamela Kennedy, Early Childhood Development Unit
Jeanette Schollum, Education Review Office
Linda Mitchell, Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa
Peggy Ngaheke-Luke, Te Kohanga Reo Trust
Margaret Carr, University of Waikato
Helen May, University of Waikato
Heather McDonald, Ministry of Women's Affairs
Joy Cullen, Massey University
Helen Duncan, NZEI
Fereni Ete, Pacific Island Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa

Press

Mary Wilson, Radio NZ
Cathy Bell, Dominion Sunday Times

WELCOME

Dr Anne Meade
Director, N.Z. Council for Educational Research

Tena koutou katoa. Ko Anne Meade taku ingoa. E nga manuhire ki te whare o Te Runanga o Aotearoa mo te Whakawa i te Matauranga, nau mai, haere mai. Nga mihi nui kia koutou i tenei ra. E te Minita, tena koe; Margaret Austin, tena koe. Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Welcome, thrice welcome to those who have come from the four winds - from the far North to Otago, Taranaki and Takitimu - and from Whanganui a Tara, welcome.

This seminar has been over-subscribed, not by just a few people, but by dozens. It seems that there is intense interest in the topic we have chosen and in the speakers who have agreed to be with us today. On behalf of the Board and staff of NZCER, could I thank all the speakers, or, at least, those whom the weather allowed to get here. We appreciate your being here today. This seminar would not be happening without your willingness to be a speaker.

What is the role of Government in early childhood care and education? I want to focus on two things. I think it is the role of Government to maintain the integrity of the best policies for early childhood education in the world. I think it is also the role of Government to improve quality assurance systems we have placed to ensure that parents can have confidence that the trust they place on early childhood personnel (in centres and in the state sector) is not misplaced.

First, we have integrity in our early childhood policies in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By integrity, I mean completeness - all the parts of the policy form a whole. However, the integrity of the recommendations in *Education To Be More* is being chipped away. Most survived and were promulgated in *Before Five*. Those policies are attracting the gurus from around the world. We had Professor Lilian Katz, the head of the IEA pre-primary programme, Dr Anne Stonehouse, the President of the Australian Early Childhood Association, and dozens of other overseas experts in 1991. Last year, Dr Douglas Powell came and applauded the work of the Early Childhood Development Unit. Late in 1992, I was the guest of Harry McGurk and Peter Moss in London for a month in a unit which convenes the

European Community early childhood network advising European Community governments on policy developments. They wanted to know about THE New Zealand model. This year, New Zealand is likely to host the Immediate Past President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, U.S.A., and the immediate Past President of OMEP, the world organisation for early childhood education. It is no accident that they are coming here in the early 1990s - we have policies that are the envy of the Western world, and we need to be proud of them.

Second, the role of providing quality assurance involves governments in ensuring that the funding, training, regulations, and monitoring are adequate to fulfil society's expectation that our children will benefit from early childhood experiences. I believe that our systems are not living up to our international reputation. In large part, that is because the integrity of the *Before Five* policies has been damaged already. I hear that parents are scared for their children, because some centres have staff whose level of training and professional practice are not adequate, and the monitoring systems set up by the state are not robust enough. In my view, there is a flaw in the system in the areas of ensuring adequate levels of qualified staff and of monitoring. I hope we can discuss what Government can do about this situation today.

I look forward to the speakers and to the debate in the plenary session.

Kia ora tatou katoa.

HON. MARGARET AUSTIN

LABOUR SPOKESPERSON ON EDUCATION

May I congratulate Anne Meade on her appointment as Director for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, and warmly wish her well in her task of leadership of this prestigious organisation.

She follows in the footsteps of a line of formidable New Zealanders who have made outstanding contributions to educational research as well as to education leadership. I know she is equal to the task, with an already established academic career in teaching and research, as well as Government service.

Anne's contribution to early childhood education is a testament to this, and it is entirely appropriate for the 1993 seminar to examine the role of Government in early childhood education.

These seminars focus attention on an area in education in a way which forces the participants to examine and clarify the issues and directions, and, in an election year, provide you with an opportunity to weigh up the potential of the candidates for the post of Minister of Education.

It seems to me that there are two very important questions which go together: why is early childhood education so important, and consequently, what is the role of Government in early childhood education.

The literature clearly spells out how crucially significant early childhood education is. It is during this time that children form conceptions of themselves as social beings, thinkers, with abilities and self worth. The 1989 UNESCO Bulletin emphatically states that "the role of early childhood care and education can hardly be underestimated in the effect it has in shaping the character of children under the age of six, by fostering a child's full developmental potential at an early age, by facilitating a smooth transition from home to school and by identifying early signs of the need for special interventions".

Early childhood care and education is a way of empowering a child and its family to learn and grow. The research convinces us that gains in language, scholastic achievement and health in later life are directly attributable to the

quality of early childhood care and education as infants, toddlers and young children.

We must also consider the benefits to parents of access to quality early childhood care and education. There is a custodial element which is important and must not be down played as it has been in the last two years.

The changes in policy for early childhood education have created pressures for the primary caregivers who see their economic and social independence impaired as the gains of *Before Five* are eroded.

Freeing the caregiver allows women to participate in the paid workforce, do voluntary work, participate in further education, community activities or rest and recreation. Society gains through increased home income, caregivers are under less stress so the child gains, and the family gains from equality in income and status between the parents.

The benefits to society are documented in improved social adjustment of children, especially those from disadvantaged families, improved cultural identity, and language retention as both Te Kohanga Reo and Anau Ako Pasifika illustrate. We also know that high quality early childhood education improves a person's chances of success later in life as worker, parent, and home maker.

It was the weight of this evidence that led the Labour Government to adopt *Before Five*. The hallmarks of Labour's policies were, and are, quality teachers, quality environment, equity considerations for women and children, and improved access and funding.

While the reforms were based primarily on the benefits of early childhood care and education to children, it was also recognised that Government funding was a predetermining factor in securing the benefits I have outlined for parents and society.

Professor Gardiner's independent report reviewing early childhood funding, shows that the net Government contribution in 1990 was around 47%, with fees contributing 31% and voluntary contributions 22% of total funding. Clearly, parents are making a substantial contribution to the education and care of their children prior to school. But the current erosion of the Government contribution means that the dramatic gains in quality, affordability and confidence in the system which were the outcomes of *Before Five* are in jeopardy.

What were the imperatives that drove the Labour Government to adopt *Before Five* and its funding implications?

The Meade Report recommended that the State's role in early childhood education should be:

* to help meet the costs of meeting early childhood care and education,

* to provide a legislative framework which sets acceptable standards,

* to meet its responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi to ensure appropriate and adequately resourced services for Maori,

* to plan for the long term provision of early childhood services.

The Government, therefore, should set standards for the care and education of young children, provide grants in aid, provide training courses for early childhood workers, support community development, assist children who have special educational needs, and their families, and establish an environment for planning and co-ordinating services.

The Meade Report set Government a challenge and Labour rose to that challenge. It is a challenge to be committed to diverse, high quality, accessible early childhood education. It is not a challenge that can be met by one pet project, whilst cuts happen in other parts of the sector.

That is why Labour supported a wide range of New Zealand-based initiatives, helping children from birth to school, from Parents' Centres, the ECDU Parent Support Project, Plunket, to Kohanga Reo, Pacific Island Language Nests, Childcare Centres, Playcentres and Kindergartens.

I believe it is important also to say why the Labour Government decided to spend more. The research convinced us that early childhood funding needed a boost, especially as, in terms of investment in the education dollar, the evidence shows that it bears the best return. There were inequalities in access to early childhood care and education, and the reforms were intended to place the diversity of services on an equal footing. The Early Childhood Development Unit was set up to support families and advise communities on the provision of appropriate services. Further, we had to make provision for the gains which women were making in achieving economic and social equality with their partners or on their own. Women simply had to be supported with affordable quality early

childhood care and education services. Only Government intervention could deliver all of these objectives.

Before Five was in many ways the culmination of years of intense activity among those involved in early childhood education. There was agreement and understanding amongst educators, researchers and parents on what was needed to improve the quality. Transferring childcare administration to education in 1986 was an important step. Integrating training for childcare and kindergarten teachers put in place in 1988 has transformed attitudes. By 1991, when a halt was called to further implementation of the *Before Five* programme, the benefits were already being documented. Participation increased dramatically - by 64% in 5 years. Staff-child ratios improved. We saw wage increases for what were very low paid staff, reduction in parent fees, improved staff training, and a better quality environment.

I want to turn now to the Government's role. There are two principal roles for Government in early childhood care and education. First, the Government is responsible for quality provision, and second, it is responsible for funding. This should be at no less a level than was envisaged in *Before Five*.

There are a number of documented determinants of quality, each requiring an intervention to establish minimum requirements either by legislation or regulation.

Staff-child ratios must be appropriate to the age group. That is why the distinction is made between infants, toddlers and young children. Ratios, along with the proportion of trained staff, have a direct bearing on the quality of education and care. The increase in ratios and reduction in training requirement in the 1991 changes have impacted on the ability of the centres to maintain quality. Centres are being cast in the role of child minders, rather than concerned with mana atua, mana whenua, mana tangata, mana reo and mana aotuuroa, which are all part of a holistic approach to early childhood education.

Staff training encompasses teacher registration and education along with provision for appraisal and staff development. Parents have a right to expect that the supervisors and staff in early childhood centres are highly educated and reflective. The partnership in the educative process between parent and educator cannot be fostered if the teacher lacks the range of competencies needed to develop and execute good programmes.

The task is very demanding, so 3-year training, with practical experience, along with registration, are essential if we are

to progress in achieving the social returns from early childhood education I have already mentioned.

Over time, I believe these requirements should be applied across the early childhood sector as they are almost everywhere in the developed world. It pains me that the 3-year training requirement has been abandoned, that kindergarten teachers need not be registered, and ratios for the under-2s in mixed centres have been raised. They are all measures of quality which must be reinstated. More than this, I would like to see all early childhood workers trained and registered.

Quality can also be defined in relation to all the direct and indirect learning experiences, that is, the curriculum offered in an early childhood centre. In Aotearoa, this curriculum must be educationally, culturally and developmentally appropriate for our children, if they are to grow up as confident, competent learners with a real sense of belonging. I have been very impressed with the work being done in developing Te Whariki, the curriculum guidelines for early childhood education. They are the result of wide ranging consultation with all the early childhood providers, including Te Kohanga Reo and Anau Ako Pasifika. The clarity of thinking and understanding of process coming through are as refreshing as they are exciting. If adopted and supported with investment in professional development, they have the potential to put New Zealand early childhood care and education in the same league worldwide as our achievements in the teaching of reading.

To deliver quality places an onus on the Government to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of services and compliance with regulations. I am sure that Jeanette Schollum will outline how this will be done with reduced ERO staff later in the day.

I believe greater emphasis must be placed on study and research to underpin policy development and decision making. The Waikato group, Anne Meade's longitudinal study on the influences of early childhood experiences, work which will be initiated here at NZCER, Ministry of Education contracts, and social science research funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology are essential in providing evidence to support or reject what we are doing.

We must replace rhetoric with soundly based research which stands up to the usual tests of its validity. The public expects us to deliver and they are tired of jargon to wrap up values they do not accept. In the main, families accept their responsibilities and do not see themselves as state dependants

because they believe implicitly that the Government has a role in regulating for quality early childhood education and providing funding. They cannot be blamed if what they have seen since 1990 is the extension of user pays in the name of self reliance, and funding cuts masquerading as efficiency.

Quality then is determined by staff-child ratios, trained registered teachers, the curriculum, monitoring and research; the Government has a role in each of these either as the funder or the regulator.

What of the Government's role in funding? Any Government, truly committed to quality must fund services adequately. Labour's plan was to increase funding on early childhood education to about $280 million in the 1994-95 financial year. We may not have achieved the target by 1995, but I think it is useful to remind ourselves that even this level of funding represents less than 7% of the total education budget.

After *Before Five* had been operating for little over a year, Professor Gardiner could already show that Labour's funding enabled a large proportion of centres to achieve - and even exceed - quality standards. He found the goals of equity, quality, accessibility and affordability were largely being met, but did suggest some aspects of accountability needed to be addressed. He argued for the full implementation of *Before Five*, that is, the mixed model with universal funding and limited targeting. Instead, the 1991 Budget delivered reduced universal funding and a tightly targeted component. Overall it represented a cut of some $35 million in 1991-92.

The task now is to get the *Before Five* programme back on the tracks in order to implement it fully by the turn of the century. Labour will do this. It will take careful consultation with educators, researchers and policy advisers, but I, along with my colleagues, am determined to achieve the goals we set ourselves in 1989. Commitment to early childhood care and education is vital, simply because it is the foundation for all that follows.

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DR THE HON. LOCKWOOD SMITH

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

This financial year, New Zealand will spend $4.846 billion on education, which includes $240 million for student loans. This $4.846 billion represents 16.6% of Government expenditure, or 6.1% of GDP.

It's not a bad investment. Because of the long lead-time for such collating information and differences in how statistics are collected we can't be 100% sure how we rank compared to the rest of the OECD. However, the best figures I have are that we're placed 2nd in the OECD for education as a percentage of total Government expenditure, and 6th equal as a percentage of GDP.

What is interesting is to examine exactly where that nearly $5 billion goes. We spend 28.1% of the total vote, excluding student loans and allowances, on tertiary education. That places us 5th in the OECD. Our investment of $192.363 million in early childhood education is only 4% of the vote. That's about 11th in the OECD. Just compare two of those figures: 28% into tertiary and just 4% into early childhood.

There is clearly an imbalance, especially considering that reliable longitudinal research shows that only with appropriate early childhood education can students and the taxpayer get the best return from future education. Why is it that despite the fact that research has repeatedly shown the vital importance of early childhood education, historically it has been funded at a rate far lower than other areas of education?

Dr Helen May has suggested reasons why early childhood education has not received the attention it deserves in her 1990 paper *Growth and Change in the Early Childhood Services: A Story of Political Conservatism, Growth and Constraint*. I want to mention three of the points Helen made.

First the establishment of services has tended to be fought for by women and so in less enlightened times was seen as an extension of parenting rather than part of the education system. While on this topic, it's especially appropriate in Women's Suffrage Year to mention the role of women in the development of early childhood education in New Zealand.

The second factor I want to mention is that in the past, only particular models of early childhood education were considered acceptable, with a division between those models which have been seen as "educational" and those where the educational component was not quite so obvious to conservative eyes.

The third factor is possibly the strongest. Compare the different public responses to suggested policy changes in early childhood education and tertiary education. Suggested policy changes in tertiary education will lead inevitably to an urgent meeting between the Minister and the Vice-Chancellors, comment about "academic freedom" from tertiary staff and students. That's not necessarily the case in early childhood education.

Dr Maris O'Rourke has suggested that the lack of a truly effective lobby group for early childhood education is because of its diversity - an educational strength that is also a political disadvantage.

The extent of diversity in early childhood education makes New Zealand unique. I mentioned before that women have played a vital role in the development of our early childhood education system. That has been a constant theme of early childhood education in New Zealand. The community and voluntary groups have initiated developments at the local level, while since early this century, Governments have accepted their social responsibility for early childhood education and provided support, largely by way of financial support for community-based initiatives.

This relationship between the community and the Government has been healthy. There has been total ownership of ECE by the community. As a result, we have had a dynamic early childhood education sector that has been responsive to community needs. The development of Te Kohanga Reo, driven almost entirely by the Maori community, is one example from the past 20 years.

The diversity of early childhood education, which has been such a strength, has also caused some problems. We have an array of early childhood services, initiated by the community. Each had its own funding arrangements. And as in other education sectors, those who were around longer and knew the system, tended to receive the most. Quality, availability, accessibility and affordability varied from community to community and from service to service.

With early childhood education now being seen as an economic imperative as well as an educational and social

responsibility, this Government, and the last, have had to look closely at whether we have been playing our part fully as one of the early childhood education team.

The Government's role in early childhood education, as I see it, is to set standards nationally without undermining diversity, fund providers that meet the needs of their community equally and fairly, and ensure that standards have been met.

The Meade Report was the first attempt to bring these goals together for all early childhood education, and resulted in the policy document *Before Five*. There have been some changes following the election, but the goals of accessibility equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and economy have remained firmly in place.

Early childhood education services are now funded on a per session, per child basis. The funding follows the child. That's given parents a genuine choice, and it allows for even greater diversity.

In 1990, legislation was passed establishing licensing requirements for all early childhood centres. No centre may operate without a license unless exempt, as in the case of playgroups where at least half of the parents are present.

In 1992, new codes of practice established minimum standards for chartered home-based networks.

All early childhood centres are now fully self-managing as was intended in *Before Five*. Finally, new curriculum guidelines for early childhood education are being developed which will provide the framework for early childhood education in New Zealand.

Work on the draft curriculum guidelines began in 1990 under Dr Helen May and Margaret Carr. They were completed late last year after the most extensive consultation of any Ministry of Education contract. I hope that the guidelines will be finalised and approved before the end of the year. The guidelines will provide a framework for developmentally appropriate programmes and practices in chartered early childhood services.

When approved they should provide the basis for an early childhood curriculum for children in chartered early childhood settings. Their principles, aims and objectives will have links with the New Zealand Curriculum Framework. There will be an interconnection between the aims and objectives of the guidelines and the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

Learning in both early childhood education and the early primary school will, in part, take into account the other.

Participation in early childhood education has more than doubled since 1980. In that time, we have seen the growth of Te Kohanga Reo, childcare centres, playgroups, Pacific Island language groups and home-based services.

While we have increased participation and an excellent range of early childhood education services, there is a gap in provision. In the first two years of a child's life, there has been a lack of on-going parent education and support programmes despite the fact that research shows that this is a critical time in development, especially in language development. For a parent with a new baby, this is the "teachable moment" and I've long been concerned that we haven't been capturing it.

The second gap in provision that I am concerned about is education at home. I believe that we can have the best early childhood education system in the world, but if parents are not part of that system, it will never be as effective as it could be.

These are the reasons why we are piloting Parents As First Teachers. I announced earlier this month that I am interested in expanding the Parents as First Teachers programme into areas outside the current four pilot project areas.

I am, of course, determined to maintain the integrity of the pilot and the results of its evaluation will determine the long-term future of the project. When considering Parents As First Teachers, the integrity of the trial must come first.

There are two reasons why I am interested in expanding Parents As First Teachers.

The first is that there is tremendous enthusiasm for the project outside the geographical areas of the pilot programme. I don't want to dampen that enthusiasm; I think it should be encouraged. As a scientist, I know that it's not a particularly good reason to expand Parents As First Teachers, but as long as the integrity of the pilot project is maintained, I am prepared to consider it. If the evaluation project proves the programme not to be effective, we would, of course, modify or cancel it.

The more scientific reason to expand the programme is to research alternative approaches. Two of the regions in the pilot project - Gisborne and South Auckland - were chosen partly because of the high number of Maori and Pacific Island

families in those areas. This was because it is important to ensure that the programme is appropriate for unique New Zealand cultures and languages. It's important that a specifically New Zealand approach is developed if the programme is going to provide us with the results that we seek. By expanding the programme, we will be able to explore alternative approaches which we may find are more appropriate in a New Zealand setting.

Parents As First Teachers is the first component of the Government's education strategy. Early childhood education is the second component. They are vital to the success of the Government's education and economic strategy. They may not pay dividends very quickly, but in the long-run they are the best investment we can possibly make in our future.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: SUPPORT AND ADVICE FOR SERVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Pamela Kennedy
Early Childhood Development Unit

My focus is on the following four aspects of the Government's role in early childhood.

1) Believers and sceptics - A main Government role is to have all members of Government, Government agencies and as many members of the public as possible being firm believers in the importance and value of early childhood education and development programmes.

2) The work of the Early Childhood Development Unit since 1989 - with Pacific Island Language Groups, Playgroups, Parent Support projects and establishing services; and the range and importance of Government support for programmes that are more informal than licensed and chartered early childhood centre and home-based services.

3) The role of Government in advisory support and professional development for all adults (staff, management and parents) involved with licensed services, based on an action research model and delivered nationally.

4) The importance of community development models of parent support that are culturally appropriate for Maori and Pacific Island communities and how child health checks, and transport to them and other services, could be built into existing models.

1. Belief in Importance and Value of Early Childhood

There are a lot of believers in the importance of quality care and attention for children during their earliest months and years. Belief in the need for quality care is grounded in many cultural traditions and in recognition that children are the next generation. Children represent the continuity of tradition as well as the hope for, and fear of, change.

Some sceptics feel that families can and do provide the attention needed for healthy growth and development. They may agree that the early years of a child's life are important but they see no need for special programmes to assist children and families during that period.

Their experience often does little to help them to understand why it is hard for a young and harried mother, struggling alone to survive in an unsupportive urban environment, to provide the love, health care, and attention and experiences for her child that she would like to provide.

In some cases, the above view about what families should be and do is related closely to another source of scepticism - the belief that a mother's place is in the home.

Scepticism rooted in this view of the maternal role persists, even though programmes to enhance early care and development can reach into the home and can respect the primary role of mothers and families in the process. It persists even though mothers, traditionally, have seldom been the only person providing care for their young children. It persists in spite of the fact that many women must work outside the home, and that studies show provision of alternate care can be good for both mother and child.

Some sceptics are open to the idea that early development is important and should be fostered, but they want to be shown that early childhood is a better investment than roads or dams or primary schools or universities. They want visible and hard evidence that proposed programmes will work.

However, an investment in early childhood development is not like an investment in a road or a dam. Roads and dams can be seen once they are completed and their function is relatively easy to understand. Sceptics would like a similarly visible result and a clear set of concrete guidelines and examples of various kinds of programmes that have been shown to work for early childhood development.

Thus, a main Government role is to have all members of Government, Government agencies and as many members of the public as possible being firm believers in the importance and value of early childhood education and development programmes.

The rationale that follows draws upon eight complementary lines of argument for the importance of support for programmes of early childcare and development. These are:

1 *A human rights argument*. Children have a right to live and to develop to their full potential.

2 *A moral and social values argument*. Through children humanity transmits its values. That transmission begins with infants. To preserve desirable moral and social values in the future, one must begin with children.

3 *An economic argument.* Society benefits economically from investing in child development, through increased production and cost savings.

4 *A programme efficacy argument.* The efficacy of other programmes (e.g., health, nutrition, education, women's programmes) can be improved through their combination with programmes of child development.

5 *A social equity argument.* By providing a "fair start", it is possible to modify socioeconomic and gender-related inequities.

6 *A community development argument.* Children provide a rallying point for social and community actions that build consensus and solidarity.

7 *A scientific argument.* Research evidence demonstrates forcefully that the early years are critical in the development of intelligence, personality, and social behaviour, and that there are long-term effects associated with a variety of early childhood programmes.

8 *Changing social and demographic circumstances.* The increasing survival of vulnerable children, changing family structures, urban-rural migration, women in the labour force, and other changes require increased attention to early care and development.

2. Support of More Informal Programmes

The Early Childhood Development Unit is working with 224 Pacific Island language groups, 359 funded playgroups and more than 220 unfunded playgroups. These figures are all double the number of groups that existed in October 1989. We are also advising another 157 individuals or groups who are wanting to establish a licensed early childhood service and 23 of these have been licensed in the last 6 months.

This work, plus community development and parent support, is all with groups that:
a) are more informal than licensed and chartered services
b) receive less funding than bulk funding or no funding
c) are not represented by national early childhood organisations - except for the Pacific Island Early Childhood Association of Aotearoa and the Cook Island, Samoan and Tongan organisations which it is great to be able to work with.

With the increasing number of groups (often in small rural communities in the case of playgroups) the funding support is being stretched to the limit. As around 15,000 children are

involved in these services their importance should not be overlooked and with the constant, increasing demand for appropriate, quality Pacific Island early childhood education the importance will have to be highlighted.

3. Advisory Support for Licensed Services

Government has a very important ongoing role in the provision of advisory support and professional development for all adults involved with licensed and chartered services - staff, management and parents. Continual reflection and evaluation on beliefs, attitudes and practices is necessary for quality programmes to be a reality.

The use of an action research model involving a consultation process that ensures on-site delivery of agreed work targeted at specified needs ensures the best possible outcomes from advisory support and professional development. Involvement of staff, management and parents also means that beliefs and attitudes on, for example, child development and curriculum aims and principles are more likely to be shared between homes and early childhood services. Nationally co-ordinated delivery is also critical for an overview of standards, trends and needs.

4. Culturally Appropriate Models of Parent Support

Douglas Powell (1989) points out that:
a) Traditional parent education programmes have assumed that the dissemination of information to parents will affect behaviours and attitudes, while a parent support approach assumes that the provision of social support and networks is necessary to positively influence parent functioning.

b) An appropriate match of programme and parent world views may be necessary to maintain programme credibility in the eyes of parents and may lead to better outcomes than if views on child development and parenting are mismatched.

c) There is theoretical and some research support for using a significant amount of programme time for open-ended parent discussion. The principles of adult education have long recommended that there should be a strong experiential component in programmes for adults. This would seem especially important in parent programmes because parents are likely to process new information according to existing beliefs and constructs about their child and child development. Discussion is necessary to provide an opportunity for parents to digest new insights in relation to existing ideas.

These pointers tie in with how we say we work with children - by starting where the child is at and encouraging and allowing them to develop and process their map and constructs of the world. It is logical that the same principles hold true across all human development, thinking and learning.

Currently the Early Childhood Development Unit has 28 Maori parent support projects operating that involve 476 families and 601 children. There are also 12 Pacific Island parent support projects with 129 families and 140 children involved.

The Maori parent support projects are usually marae based and mostly in rural isolated areas. Extended families and grandparents in particular are involved and a spin-off has been the number of adults learning Te Reo as a result of group contact. Several groups involve predominantly sole and unemployed parents. One project is working with 48 teenage mothers and another with prison inmates who are parents.

The four consistent messages in the Unit's parent support work since 1989 have been:
a) the negative effects that a lack of personal or public transport can have on parents with young children;

b) the isolation and lack of confidence felt by parents without supportive social networks;

c) the need for access to health checks and services to be part of all parent support work;

d) the importance of drawing upon cultural and traditional wisdom and practice and not advocating uniform childrearing practices for all.

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WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE AND THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR

Jeanette Schollum
Education Review Office

Rurea, taitea,

kia toitu, ko taikaka anake

Strip away the bark

Expose the heartwood

Get to the heart of the matter

(Proverb adopted by the
Education Review Office)

This session will focus on:

- the place of the Education Review Office in the reforms;
- a brief description of outputs;
- assurance audits, purpose and procedures; and
- the findings from an overview analysis on non-compliance with contractual obligations and undertakings in early childhood services which received an assurance audit between October 1992 and December 1992.

Setting the Scene

One of the significant characteristics of public sector reforms initiated in New Zealand since the mid 1980s has been the separation of the functions of executive Government.

On the one hand the diverse roles of the Crown have been clarified; investor, purchaser, regulator. Each of these has been analysed and, in many cases, handled through the

establishment of separate institutional arrangements to represent each role.

On the other hand, in the core public service a marked distinction has been made between the role and functions of organisations responsible for providing policy advice and those set up to deliver specific services in the same policy field. Furthermore, clear distinctions have been drawn between the arrangements for provision (whether policy or some other service), and the means by which the management and distribution of services are audited and evaluated.

There are now two departments of state in education: the Ministry of Education, which serves an *ex ante* function in providing policy advice (and a range of operational/delivery services as well); and the Education Review Office, which has an *ex post* function.

In setting up the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Government emphasised the importance it placed on both self review and external auditing. (From an overall Government perspective, ERO exemplifies the notion of internal audit or self review - the Crown has provided itself with a self review function in respect of its own educational activities. From an early childhood service point of view it is most likely to be regarded as external.)

The Crown carries out this executive self review function by directing ERO to conduct independent audits of the early childhood educational institutions licensed by the Crown to deliver educational services.

Over the past 3 years, the definition of the Education Review Office's role and functions has been the subject of considerable internal and external attention, with the range of evaluatory activities undertaken by the Office undergoing significant changes. The most recent changes came about as a result of a redefining of the Office's services during 1992. The Office has now focused its attention on two different types of evaluation - assurance audits and effectiveness reviews. Assurance audits are undertaken in the early childhood and school sectors; and schools have an additional evaluatory exercise in the form of effectiveness reviews. A third evaluation activity is Evaluation Services - which I will return to a little later.

A closer look now, at **Assurance Audits**. These refer to audits of individual educational organisations to determine their compliance with contractual requirements, including the quality of service.

There are three different kinds of assurance audits - regular, discretionary and specific compliance:

i regular assurance audits examine the performance of the managing body (governing body in the case of schools) against legislative or regulatory requirements and specific contractual undertakings for the provision of care and education services;

ii discretionary assurance audits follow regular audits which disclosed poor performance, or were initiated through community concern; and

iii specific compliance audits, to audit the operation of specific areas of performance which are not addressed in regular assurance audits.

Definition of Assurance Audits

An assurance audit is a process which examines and reports on the extent to which a managing or governing body meets its contractual obligations and undertakings to the Crown. These obligations and undertakings are contained in legislation and regulations and include any specific undertakings entered into through a licence, charter, property occupancy or other agreements.

Assurance audits are undertaken in all state and private schools and in all licensed or chartered state and privately owned early childhood services.

To date, the Education Review Office has audited or reviewed (using methodologies developed for use in 1990-92) the performance of 2700 early childhood centres.

Purposes of Assurance Audits

Assurance audits are undertaken in order to:

i assure the Minister responsible for the Education Review Office about the performance of governing and managing bodies in fulfilling their contractual obligations and undertakings;

ii inform the managing and governing bodies about their performance in fulfilling their contractual obligations and undertakings;

iii provide a database for subsequent analysis by the Office to inform policy development and decision making by Government and managing and governing bodies; and

iv provide information which can be aggregated for analyses to be undertaken and reports provided on parts of the system of delivery of educational services nationally - evaluation services.

The Education Review Office has a duty to report independently. The Office does not invent or impose its own interpretation of specification or standards; it discovers them in the contract documents, legislation and other requirements and audits against those requirements.

What are these contractual obligations and undertakings?

Where do you find them?

All undertakings listed in an institution's charter form part of the total contractual relationship with the Crown and is therefore covered in an assurance audit.

An assurance audit covers the following Acts, regulations and other sources:

- Building Act 1991
- Building Regulations 1992
- Education Act 1989
- Education Amendment Act 1989
- Education Amendment Act 1990
- Education (ECC) Regulations 1990
- Education (ECC) Regulations 1990 Amendment 1
- Education (ECC) Regulations 1990 Amendment 2
- Employment Contracts Act 1991
- Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987
- Human Rights Commission Act 1977
- Race Relations Act 1971
- Smoke-Free Environments Act
- State Sector Act 1988
- State Sector Amendment Act 1980
- etc

Phases in Undertaking an Assurance Audit

There are three broad phases in the audit process which guide the Office in undertaking assurance audits. These are present throughout an audit.

1 The intentions of management to meet the contractual obligations and undertakings are ascertained.

i.e., Are you aware of your undertakings and do you have clear and explicit intentions to meet them?

2 Judgements are made about management's plans and intentions to meet the undertakings.

i.e., Are the things that you are planning or doing, going to meet the undertakings?

3 Verification is sought that the requirements are being met and therefore that the plans and intentions are being put into action.

Stages of an Assurance Audit

There are three distinct stages in an assurance audit in which the phases outlined above occur. Early childhood services that have received an assurance audit will be familiar with the written report and the time that reviewers are present in the centres. While the time spent on-site in a centre is important, so also is the considerable planning and analysis undertaken off-site before the audit team come to the centre.

In the off-site stage the early childhood service scheduled for an assurance audit is notified of the coming audit. At the same time a range of documentation is requested from the early childhood service. Once received, information on the available documentation is analysed and preliminary conclusions formulated.

In most situations an introductory meeting is held to discuss the coming assurance audit.

At this point the reviewer/s undertaking the audit are on-site in the centre being audited. During this time reviewers are gathering and analysing information from available documentation and discussions and observing the centre in action. Preliminary conclusions formulated at the off-site stage are revised in the light of the new information.

Finally, audit conclusions are reached as areas of compliance/non-compliance are identified based on facts and evidence.

The audit report is written. The audit team:

- decides on actions required to be included:
- determines recommendations for development;
- decides what, if any, follow-up actions should be undertaken by the Office.

The audit report is despatched to the managing body which is asked to confirm receipt of the report and that the document is factually correct.

Assurance audit reports are public documents, open and available to the communities of interest associated with any early childhood centre. It is expected that these reports will provide reliable information to those communities, including the parents of children in the area.

Evaluation Services

Earlier, I referred to a third type of evaluation undertaken by the Office - Evaluation Services. This is the responsibility of the Analytical Services Group based in the Corporate Office.

Evaluation services comprise evaluations of aspects of the education system at a national level, including issues related to curriculum policy, management structures and systems and curriculum management, and delivery practices.

Of particular interest to you will be an analysis undertaken late in 1992 by the Analytical Services Group. This analysis looked at the level of compliance with requirements drawing on data from assurance audits carried out between October and December 1992.

Overview Analysis

Assurance Audits of Early Childhood Services: Non-compliance

1 This overview analysis is based on action-required items from the reports of 278 assurance audits completed by 24 December 1992 and using the October 1992 procedures.

2 No distinction between childcare, kindergarten, playcentre and umbrella organisations is made in this analysis.

3 Some reports required more than ten items of action whereas others required none. The average number of actions required per centre is four.

Summary

The main areas of non-compliance with contractual obligations and undertakings reported in Early Childhood Services assurance audits are:

* management planning;

* safety, welfare and hygiene.

Results

Planning

Forty-four percent did not have adequate management plans and policies.

This percentage included failure to:

* plan to meet all obligations;

* consult with parents and families;

* develop policies on staffing and finance;

* develop organisational policies;

* specify methods to achieve goals;

* measure goal achievement.

Safety, Welfare and Hygiene

Thirty-seven percent required attention to matters of safety and hygiene.

This percentage includes failure to comply with regulations concerning:

* sleeping arrangements;

* hazards;

* poisons;

* safe storage;

* floor surfaces;

* cleaning and hygiene;

* emergency procedures for evacuation;

* emergency procedures for fire and earthquakes;

* electrical sockets;

* security of gates and fences.

Child Abuse

Twenty-five percent required the licensee to develop a policy on the handling of any evidence of child abuse that may come to the attention of staff.

Educational Programmes

Action related to educational programmes was required in 184 instances.

These indicated failure to provide children and infants with:

* a planned co-ordinated programme;

* developmentally appropriate activities.

Record Keeping

Action related to record keeping was required in 155 instances.

These indicated failure to meet obligations to keep records of:

* people who have right of entry;

* people who are authorised to collect a child;

* particulars of accidents;

* medication given and authorised;

* funding received.

Parent Rights

Thirty-four reports required information to be given to parents on:

* the achievement of objectives;

* use of funding;

* Education Review Office reports.

Twenty-one centres have not ensured parent rights to:

* participate in decision making;

* consultation;

* complaints procedures.

Training

* Nineteen percent of centres do not budget to provide programmes of management training.

* Seventeen percent do not develop a programme and budget for inservice development and training of staff.

* There are 43 separate instances of non-compliance with various requirements concerning qualifications of staff.

* Thirteen percent do not fulfil the requirement to plan for and provide formal support and education for parents.

In Conclusion

The practice of audit is a process which exemplifies a general practice in the public sector, and one which it is hoped will provide real value to the Minister, centre management and staff and the intended beneficiaries of the education system - the children who attend early childhood and other education services. And this, surely, makes all the education activities undertaken by Government and private providers worthwhile pursuing and perfecting. The imagination and work of carers and educators, along with the provision of funding, services, and monitoring by Government departments, all contribute in their particular way to providing high quality early childhood care and education.

BACK, AGAINST THE WALL

STAFFING AND THE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Linda Mitchell
Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa

E nga mana, e nga reo, rau rangatira ma, tena koutou katoa. Nga mihi nui ki a koutou. Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Introduction

New Zealand 1993 the anniversary of women's suffrage. Women are 51% of New Zealand's population. Yet in early childhood education, women have a disproportionate representation. Early childhood services are largely staffed by women, supported by women through their hours of voluntary help, set up by women and used by women. In 1991, 34% of all women with children under the age of 5 years were part of the paid workforce. *Trends in Early Childhood Education, 1992.*

Access to good early childhood services supports their work and the work of many more women at home with their families. In a year in which New Zealanders are celebrating women's suffrage, how are early childhood services faring? What is the impact of Government policy? What is Government's role in early childhood education?

I speak as the National Secretary of the Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa, representing mainly early childhood workers in childcare centres, and teachers in kindergartens. These are the 3,500 women who are the paid staff for a large part of our early childhood services.

Theirs is a key perspective. Early childhood staff are in daily contact with families, children and community. Their professional understanding provides unique and valuable insights. Their experiences and views deserve the highest regard.

Staffing and Quality of Education

Research on early childhood education establishes that high quality services have a lasting and positive impact on the development of children and the well-being of families, at the time of attendance and for the future.

Sufficient numbers of trained staff, providing developmentally appropriate programmes, working with moderate size groups of children in a healthy environment are linked with quality education. Close relationships with whanau and community are important. (e.g., *Education to be More*, 1988; Whitebrook, Howes and Phillips, 1989).

In this year of women's suffrage, I want to focus on the staff, the women whose work to a large extent determines the quality of education that young children receive. The findings of the National Child Care Staffing Study carried out in the United States in 1988 highlight the immense importance of early childhood staff and the arrangement of their working environment in the determination of good, positive outcomes for young children.

Major findings from this study are that the better quality centres had
- higher staff wages
- better adult work environments
- lower teaching staff turnover
- better educated and trained staff
- more teachers caring for fewer children.

Better quality centres were more likely to be operated on a non-profit basis.

The most important predictor of the quality of care and education children received was staff wages.

The quality measures consisted of observations of classroom structure, overall quality and interactions between the staff and children. Children attending lower quality centres and centres with more staff turnover were less competent in language and social development.

If we want to provide the best for New Zealand children in early childhood services, we need to value the staff of those services and offer the salaries and working conditions that enable them to carry out their job with professionalism.

Staffing costs represent about two thirds of the total costs of early childhood services (Culkin, Helburn, and Morris, 1990).

In some services, for example, kindergarten, these costs are higher. Where funding is insufficient, the easiest way to cut costs is to lower staffing costs: to pay lower salaries, increase the number of children to staff, reduce the number of staff, employ less experienced or untrained staff.

The mechanism to enable this cost-cutting was set in train by the National Government primarily but not exclusively in its December 1990 Economic and Social Initiative. The following decisions were made:

1) to review state spending, from which followed reviews of funding, staffing and regulations for early childhood services, and resulted in real reductions in expenditure;
2) to halt the PSU Kindergarten Staffing Scheme which on its completion would have seen ratios of one trained kindergarten teacher to approximately 13 children in all New Zealand kindergartens, with group sizes of 40 at a maximum;
3) to remove Regulations that effectively meant that kindergartens could charge fees rather than ask for voluntary donations.

The Reviews, carried out quickly by officials, without representation from early childhood organisations, redefined and reduced Government requirements. Decisions arising from the reviews were announced in the July, 1991 budget.

* Regulations were amended, to allow a lessening of staff: child ratios for under-2-year-olds in mixed age centres from 1:4 to 1:5.
* Training requirements for the "person responsible" for early childhood centres were lessened, and the requirement for the year 1995 was set at a level on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority points system of 100 points - less than the 120 points needed for equivalency with the 3-year Diploma.
* Funding for under-2-year-olds in childcare centres was reduced from $7.25 per hour (up to 30 hours per week) to $4.50 per hour.
* Greater emphasis was placed on targeting funding to low income families through a social welfare subsidy. This indicated a worrying focus on early childhood education as "welfare" services for the poor and needy, rather than as "education" services.
* Registration for teachers, including kindergarten teachers, which had been compulsory, was made voluntary.
* Bulk funding of kindergarten teachers' salaries was announced to take effect from 1992.

These Government policy changes pushed the early childhood sector back, against the wall. The policy decisions were to affect the people whose work is integral in the provision of good education programmes: the staff. The new industrial legislation, the Employment Contracts Act, had become law in May 1991 and removed a statutory requirement for recognition of unions and challenged arrangements for fair bargaining.

Once these policy decisions were set in place, effects on the kindergarten and childcare sector were quick to take hold.

The middle part of this paper is a consideration of the impact of Government policy directions on first, the kindergarten sector and second, the childcare sector.

Impact of Government Policy on Kindergartens

Bulk funding of kindergarten teachers' salaries began on 1 March 1992, replacing central funding of salaries with decentralised funding given to associations. This policy along with the changes to regulations and the Employment Contracts Act can be seen as the basis for Government to cap expenditure and to force communities to provide for themselves.

Figures from the Ministry of Education (1990) show that the mean salary of teachers paid under the central payroll system, increases with the age of students taught: $26,483 for kindergarten teachers, $33,312 for primary teachers, $40,566 for secondary teachers and over $43,000 for college of education and tertiary staff.

Kindergarten teachers have not had a pay increase since 1989 and their current contract continues until 1994. The worth of the rate of pay has dropped because of increases in inflation.

The 1992 contract negotiations for kindergarten teachers were made difficult by the fact that kindergarten associations had a new responsibility under bulk funding for paying kindergarten teachers' salaries. Associations were facing budget deficits. There was enormous pressure to reduce the salary bill, leave provisions, and allowances; pressure that came from both kindergarten associations and the State Services Commission (on behalf of Government).

Kindergarten teachers managed to get a settlement that held together their basic pay scale and most conditions. The settlement was at some cost. The onus of responsibility for kindergarten teachers' pay and conditions was shifted from Government to the community people who were represented on associations. Anger was spent on those people because of the insufficient funding provided by Government. Relationships between teachers and associations were irrevocably damaged. In these discussions today, we need to consider who should be responsible.

Bulk funding of kindergarten teachers' salaries is taking its toll in many ways.

In order to make ends meet, pressure has come on from associations to look at ways of attracting more funding including:

- increased group sizes;
- employment of untrained staff;
- increased sessions.

Many associations have measured up the kindergartens to see how many more children they can take. Rolls have been increased to 45:45. Teachers report starting the first day of term with 20 new 3-year-olds. The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union has put a proposal to Government for teachers to teach a new group of children during one of their non-contact sessions, so that over the whole country associations can earn an extra $12.5 million in funding. No consultations had taken place with parents or teachers when this proposal went to Government. Are these proposals in the best interests of children and families? The question has not been asked.

CECUA's Teacher Workload Survey (1992) shows that a majority of teachers use the non-contact sessions for: programme planning (79%), evaluation of children's development (76%), evaluation of overall programme (74%), preparation of resources (73%), kindergarten staff meeting (69%) and evaluation of teaching performance (59%), as well as cleaning (58%), and administration (82%).

Their answers indicate the diversity and complexity of the teaching role, and the importance of non-contact time for maintenance of a quality kindergarten programme.

Cathy Wylie, in her survey of the initial impact of bulk funding, *First Impressions* (1992), notes that "reasonable staff ratios, reasonable salaries and conditions, and trained staff are all related to positive outcomes for children, ...but associations may be faced with the sad dilemma of having to choose between them." (p. 32)

Her survey shows a clear link between parental socioeconomic status and the resources available to individual kindergartens. "Equal input from Government funding distributed to kindergartens on a uniform roll-based basis will not ensure equality of outcome for all children. Mechanisms to assist equality of outcome exist in some associations, such as separate funds for special needs, but others appear not to have them." (p. 32-33)

One New Zealand Kindergarten, Kenningston Street in Waiouru, has already been threatened with closure because its variable roll numbers did not attract even funding on a regular basis. With a transient army population, this kindergarten could not

rely on having a full roll from one year to the next and even within the year. Waiouru with its high turnover of army personnel, lack of public transport, and for many an absence of extended families, has been acknowledged as an area of special need. When this kindergarten could not pay for itself the Ruahine Association wiped its hands of responsibility.

The gap between rich and poor looks set to grow wider under bulk funding. In 1991, CECUA carried out a survey of kindergartens, collecting information on the families who use the kindergarten service, the level of donations, fund-raising and voluntary help offered and the ability of families to pay fees.

The results show that 38% of kindergartens serviced mainly low-income/beneficiaries or middle- to low-income families. The capacity of this group to fund-raise also appeared less than the capacity of other groups to fund-raise, with a higher number of low-income communities raising less than $2,000 per year.

If Government funding is insufficient, and the pressure is on these families to contribute more, the already wide differences will become deeper. We can predict that staffing and the quality of education will suffer.

Impact of Government Policy on Childcare Centres

The childcare sector has fared badly under Government policy decisions.

The Employment Contracts Act of May 1991 had an immediate impact on the childcare sector. Of the 350 centres covered by the National Childcare Centres Award, only eight centres remained as party to the contract when this was renegotiated. In most of these centres, CECUA had received bargaining authority from the childcare workers. In many of these centres, the employers refused to meet with CECUA to negotiate new contract provisions. Our experience tells us that many of those workers have not had a new contract renegotiated.

In November 1992, CECUA (in preparation) carried out a Survey of Childcare Staff, which considered, in particular, how employment conditions had changed since the Government policy decisions of the previous year.

Rates of pay for childcare workers were low. For this sample, 32% were paid less than $10.50 per hour, with another 35% between $10.50 and $11.70 per hour.

There was a trend for community-based childcare centres to make less damaging changes to staffing provisions and to provide better pay rates than privately owned childcare centres.

The greater changes made by those working in private centres included working with bigger groups of children, a worse ratio of staff to children, cutbacks in sick and annual leave, redundancies, less in-service training.

The National Childcare Staffing Study similarly found differences between non-profit and for-profit centres, with non-profit centres providing better employment benefits, paying higher wages, having better trained staff and better adult:child ratios.

Several instances have been revealed, for example by the Parent Advocacy Council and the Education Review Office (1991), where Government funding intended for early childhood education has been spent on capital assets. As the Education Review Office stated, "There continues to be concern, as expressed in the pilot review, of the use of increased income to purchase additional property or to make substantial improvements to existing property, which creates the clear potential for capital gain if the business is sold." (p. 3) Why is Government funding being spent on profit-making centres?

Policy for the Future

For decades, early childhood education services have been subject to Government policy changes as new governments are elected and different ideas become fashionable. In 1993 early childhood services are defending their small hold on funding from Vote Education. Urgent steps forward are needed in the following areas to ensure that New Zealand children have access to the quality of education that they deserve.

First, an overall planned and co-ordinated approach, with new policies that are tested and evaluated so that early childhood services are not subjected to the continual vagaries of government policy changes. In this planning, consultation needs to take place with the people who are deeply involved and understanding of the issues: the staff, the families.

Second, regulations that not only protect children's health and safety but encourage the highest quality of education. This must include quality standards for staffing ratios, training requirements, and group sizes.

Third, an immediate return to direct salary payments for

kindergarten teachers and a move towards direct salary payments for other early childhood workers. Along with government responsibility for the funding of salaries, the repeal of the Employment Contracts Act and new and fair industrial legislation is necessary.

Fourth, government support for community-based services and a withdrawal of funding from profit-making centres.

Fifth, access to top quality early childhood education services that suit the needs of all families who want that access.

New Zealand could learn from the European Childcare Network which has set realistic targets for improving early childhood services. Helen Penn, speaking at the 5th New Zealand Early Childhood Convention, told participants: "In terms of early childhood education in Europe, there is a tradition of publicly funded, publicly run services, coherently organised and well-financed. France provides full-time nursery education for more than 95% of three and four year olds and for 50% of two year olds. The Ministry of Education in Spain is responsible for all education from 0-16 and it is planned as a continuous pattern throughout the different stages of schooling. All those working with young children must now undertake a three year teacher training course."

It is in the interests of New Zealand society to take heed of the evidence and make a public investment in early childhood education where it will count.

New Zealand's early childhood services could be the best in the world.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

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GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE FUNDING OF THE KOHANGA REO

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Te Kohanga Reo National Trust

Te Kohanga Reo is now 11 years old and there are 812 centres to date.

To tell you firstly a little about myself, I am proud to say that I am a parent and I was part of the first Marae-based Kohanga Reo and we were the second in the country to commence in 1982.

This was the turning point for us, as our children were enrolled in Kindergarten. Te Kohanga Reo gave us another choice. Today I can say that it was the best choice I have ever taken in my life so far.

Today there are some 14,700 children aged under 5 years in Kohanga Reo. There are 1900 Kaiako working in the service of the Kohanga. Working with each Kaiako, there are at least two other adults or kaiawhina. Many Kohanga Reo Kaiako work voluntarily.

In 1982, the Kohanga Reo movement began; 200 or so Kaumatua from around the country came together and Kohanga Reo was conceived.

The first Kohanga Reo commenced in April, 1982 at Pukeatua in Wainuiomata. By the end of 1982, 110 Kohanga Reo were operating.

The government's role in the initial setting up of Kohanga Reo was a once-only Koha grant of $5,000. The Kohanga Reo received this grant once only for the first 3 years of the movement. The Kohanga Reo operations were mainly funded by Maori people, because Kohanga Reo was their initiative.

For every government $ that was given our people put in $5s.

In the years of 1985/1986/1987 every Kohanga Reo was able to get an annual grant of $18,000 and this amount helped towards operating costs. However, again our whanau around each operation, and indeed the growth of the movement from 1982-1989, was largely dependent on how the whanau worked on supplementing income from fundraising.

In 1989 the Kohanga Reo movement came within the realm of bulk funding and licensing policies set out in Before Five.

Today there are 644 licensed Kohanga Reo. If total bulk funding was offered, the Kohanga Reo Trust would take this option because our Kaupapa is the empowering of people, self-determination and self-management. Our Kohanga are self-managed. Te Reo is the most important part of our Kaupapa notwithstanding total whanau development. That is why the movement is such a success. I know this to be true because as a parent and part of a Kohanga and as well as working for the Kohanga Reo Trust, the movement since the beginning has grown so quickly in such a short span of time. Also the living proof is visible in that the mokopuna since 1982 are now entering their third stage of development and are in the college system. These young people are a different breed and are more aware and confident of the world around them and this has got to be good for ourselves and our country as a whole.

Since 1989, government's relationship with the Kohanga had become very strained. Why? Because its policies regarding the Before Five changes had created very regulatory policies which actually could have eroded our Kaupapa. We are by no means against licensing, because like you we want the best care for our children, but some regulations seem to be over restrictive and culturally wrong. As an example we are going to have ERO coming through the Kohanga Reo this year and we hope that they will have plenty of Maori-speaking people on their staff in order to effectively review operations on the ground.

The Kohanga Reo movement realises that the government does not have an endless supply of money and therefore we all have to live within our means. As an example the Trust is undergoing restructuring whereby a total staff of 36 is to be increased to 60 odd and this is being done within the existing resources of funding for 36 staff. The movement, like a lot of other services, has an enormous amount of voluntary help and Kohanga Reo is proud of the voluntary assistance from people for the good of the movement but more importantly for the good of the mokopuna.

Discussion

Anne Smith asked about the Whakapakari training package, with $800,000 to train 220 people. Peggy described this 3-year package as one designed firstly for Kaiako with Te Reo and then for Matua/Rangatahi without Te Reo. The package is a full 3-year course. The special nature of the package is that it is delivered in Te Reo and the trainee or akonga must be able to deliver 5 days per week 6 hours per day in Te Reo. In

the past the Kaiako had other training in early childhood care and education that was good but that training did not and does not equip them to work in Kohanga Reo and be able to deliver in Maori 5 days per week 6 hours per day to the mokopuna. The other bonus for the training is that the whanau nominate who will train and the training is done at the operation level and with the whanau for not only the individual but for the total whanau and most importantly the mokopuna.

Olive Hawera asked who selected and whether the 220 people to be trained were already working. Peggy replied that the whanau nominate the Akonga and the District TKR along with the Trust selected the Akonga. The Akonga in the main work as Kaiako in their respective Kohanga Reo and their training is done in the operation with the total whanau. The training encompasses quality delivery to the mokopuna and whanau.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM IN AOTEAROA - NEW ZEALAND

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Following on from the Before Five education reforms that began in 1989, Government's role in early childhood curriculum has become increasingly focused and directive. The work we have undertaken at Waikato University in the development of *Te Whariki: The National Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines* (1992), has been a fundamental aspect of this new involvement and sits alongside a raft of reforms to do with funding, regulation, training and administration directed towards increasing quality and accountability in early childhood services. In this sense new curriculum initiatives are part of an holistic approach to improving quality and could be successful if the parts continue to be connected. As the Before Five policies move through the hands of successive governments these connections can move out of alignment as has been seen already in the 1991 cutbacks in early childhood funding and regulations. Government interest in curriculum has not only arisen from a new political focus on early childhood issues. Just as the Before Five policies were linked in part to the Labour Government's wider educational reforms throughout the school and tertiary sectors,[1] so too are the National Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines an extension of the National Government's quest to reform the school curriculum and set new standards for assessment. While early childhood can benefit from a more unified approach to educational provision, there is also a wariness amongst early childhood organisations and educators concerning school models being inappropriately imposed on a sector which is community or privately owned and whose children have special developmental needs. This paper summarises Government's role in early childhood curriculum prior to Before Five, traces the Government's emerging role in defining early childhood curriculum since Before Five, and comments on some issues this raises.

Early Childhood Curriculum In the Postwar Years

(i) Regulatory Focus

In the traditional partnership between community organisations and Government for the delivery of early childhood services, past governments did not concern themselves directly with curriculum content or process. The domain of curriculum, in

the sense of what actually happened for children in the programmes, was seen as the responsibility of the various organisations and services. Each of these had a distinctive curriculum that reflected their own rationale for providing early childhood education and care. Government focus was on ensuring a regulatory framework for safety, health and staffing issues, although the consequences of such dictates certainly impinged on curriculum. There were differences between Government agencies in the role they saw for themselves in curriculum involvement. The instructions to childcare centres (originally under the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education and later the Department of Social Welfare) was that:

> Suitable activities shall be provided ... which shall be adequately supervised, which shall be appropriate to the age and circumstance of the children ... and shall include ... adequate periods for indoor and outdoor activity.[2] (1960)

In the 1985 regulations this was expanded to include "fostering their physical, emotional, social, cultural, creative and cognitive development" with the requirement that the programme be periodically reviewed "having regard to developments in childcare practice and the developmental needs of children".[3] Government did not provide guidelines of explanation or elaboration on what or how any of this should happen. In contrast kindergartens, under the Department of Education, received no curriculum directions in their regulations.[4] Playcentres, also with the Department of Education, had their own national standards rather than Government regulations. These also did not address curriculum, except they included a comprehensive equipment list that did make a strong statement concerning the focus and rationale of playcentre curriculum.

(ii) Training

Government reticence in dictating curriculum content did not, however, mean a lack of interest; the focus was one of attempting to influence curriculum rather than to define it as is currently happening. Regulations for both childcare and kindergarten required various levels of training; the assumption being that the curriculum for children might therefore be appropriate. The increasing Government support of kindergarten and later playcentre and childcare training was ultimately to do with curriculum concerns. *The Kindergarten Regulations 1959* stated that "the syllabus of training shall be approved by the Director General of Education", and in 1974 kindergarten training was transferred into Teachers Colleges which were under more direct Government

control. Similarly, funding to childcare centres, which began in 1983, was tagged to staff who were trained or in training. Later in the *Report of the Working Party on Three Year Training for Kindergarten Teachers* (1986) and the *Report of the Working Party on Childcare Training* (1986), codes of hours and areas of study were prescribed as guidelines for the new 3-year integrated training programmes and Department of Education officials were represented on planning committees.[5]

(iii) Advisory and Inservice

Another area where Government traditionally saw a role in influencing early childhood curriculum was through the establishment of its own advisory services and later inservice training.[6] In 1949 Beeby appointed Moira Gallagher as the first Preschool Advisory Officer in the Department of Education, with a brief to free up the kindergartens and promote the progressive educational ideal of "learning through play". Gallagher recounted the situation she faced:

> They were masterpieces of organisation... The children were divided into four groups... They had morning talk and singing together, then lavatory, handwashing, morning tea, finger play, painting or plasticine. All things went in rotation so that all four groups didn't end up in the lavatory.. So some had to start the day in the lavatory... You had turned (the children) into parcels.[7]

During these early postwar years the Government was intent on promoting reforms for a more child centred approach to learning throughout the whole education system and this interest on early childhood curriculum was an integral part of the endeavour. The techniques used to bring about change for early childhood were those of persuasion and cajoling as the few Advisory Officers travelled the country visiting programmes and providing some of the first Government funded inservice training. Ironically the curriculum ideal of learning through play was spearheaded by the playcentre movement which had the least Government input,[8] although by the 1970s most kindergartens were running so called free play programmes and childcare centres were incorporating new curriculum ideas into their programmes.

(iv) Lopdell Courses

During the late 1970s and into the 1980s a more direct Government focus emerged with regular Department of Education Lopdell courses providing "think tank" forums for policy formulation. These involved key people across all the early childhood groups and have been crucial in the development of a cohesive approach to early childhood curriculum amongst

diverse organisations and services. Lopdell Reports were, however, confidential to the Department but fortunately there was an active black market to ensure that the impact was more widely felt. Most important was the 1988 Lopdell Curriculum Statement which identified 15 basic principles of early childhood curriculum.[9] Although this was not officially promulgated the statement received wide acclaim from those who saw it. In the event the Before Five reforms came to the fore, the Department and Lopdell disappeared and Government began defining a new role in early childhood curriculum through the Ministry of Education.

(v) The Before Five Reform Process

A key thrust of the education reforms was devolution with National Guidelines and Charters providing overall standards within which educational institutions would operate. In the Before Five implementation process a series of working parties with broad community representation were established. The key group defining Government's new role in early childhood curriculum was the Working Party on National Guidelines, Charters and Minimum Standards.[10] This group made recommendations on common regulations, national guidelines and charter requirements across all early childhood services and provided detailed drafts of how this could happen whilst still enabling the diversity that is a strength and characteristic of early childhood programmes. The working party documents recommended much stronger statements regarding curriculum content and process than had previously been the case. Thus the new *Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1990* had a much expanded section on the "Programme of Activities" than previous childcare regulations. The management now had to provide a programme rationale and involve parents and staff in discussions on the programme; the programme was to be developmentally appropriate for children with special needs, and provide "for children to become and remain confident in their own culture and the culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand". This latter regulatory requirement, although impossible to enforce, was an acknowledgement of the dissatisfaction of Maori and Pacific Island families with the monocultural curriculum focus of the mainstream early childhood services. In 1992 these same principles were also applied to home based programmes as outlined in *The Education (Home-Based Order) 1992*.

The "purple" *Management Handbook* (1989), which set out the charter requirement, formally defined curriculum as "The sum total of the child's direct and indirect learning experiences" (a statement originally coined at the 1988 Lopdell curriculum course). The Handbook outlined a number of curriculum and programme guidelines with the requirements for services to

provide a management plan to show how key aspects would be implemented in their particular programme. The management plan was the basis of the Charter each service had to develop, but sadly this interactive approach to curriculum was lost in 1990 when the Ministry of Education replaced the *Management Handbook* with a *Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices for Chartered Early Childhood Services*. The new statement expanded upon the curriculum statements set out in the *Management Handbook* but centres were able just to sign this document as compliance rather than develop a comprehensive charter. The Statement included a clause that "A set of national curriculum guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices should, when developed, provide the basis for the early childhood curriculum". There had been no consultation with early childhood organisations concerning such guidelines, although it was acknowledged that the Government's various curriculum statements were impossible to implement or enforce without some clearer guidance about what they might mean in practice. For example, the Ministry of Education as the enforcer of regulations and licensing agency could interpret one view; in some areas the Education Review Office developed checklists for reviewing charters that were often inappropriate and had little to do with the aims and goals of the services themselves. Similarly, the Early Childhood Development Unit that was established to provide advice and inservice training, was making interpretations on what the curriculum statements might mean in practice, as were the training institutions in charge of training the next generation of early childhood teachers-workers. It was clear that early childhood services were operating amidst much confusion and that defining a common "curriculum language" was a rationale for national curriculum guidelines. In the event another reason emerged that now dominates the process; the idea of the national curriculum for schools. The proposed national early childhood curriculum guidelines began to be seen as something to sit alongside the new school curriculum.

(vi) National Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines

The National Government took office in late 1990, with a promise to continue the education reforms that Labour had commenced, but with an agenda to focus on curriculum and assessment. In 1991 they moved to overhaul the school curriculum with the *Draft National Curriculum,* followed by the development of Achievement Initiatives for different age levels for each subject area. The early childhood community was wary about this new focus on curriculum because of the talk of assessing 5-year olds entering school. Early childhood services did not want a 5-year-old test driving the early childhood curriculum and there was considerable concern from the early childhood organisations when the Ministry first

proposed letting a contract for the development of National Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines in 1990. The organisations were also tiring from the confusion of change, were concerned about who might be awarded the contract, and in particular saw national curriculum guidelines as limiting the diversity that characterised early childhood services. In the event our proposal from Waikato University was awarded the contract with the full backing of the early childhood organisations who saw that it was timely to define the early childhood curriculum in more detail to both protect and promote the early childhood philosophy. Our proposal also won acclaim from the outset because it argued for multiple curricula blueprints and in particular a bicultural approach to its development and content. The rationale and development of *Te Whariki* has been written about elsewhere,[11] but the exercise has shown the extraordinary consensus amongst different early childhood services concerning the proposed Curriculum Principles, and the Aims and Goals for Children, which for the first time have been codified in a national document, and people are saying, "This is us, this is what we do, this belongs to us". *Te Whariki* takes an holistic approach to curriculum which can be sustained if the separate parts of the Before Five policies also remain connected, i.e., funding, quality staffing ratios, regulatory enforcement, quality training, advisory services, professional development, accountability and evaluation. The role of Government is to ensure that these parts do not move further out of alignment so that the curriculum can be implemented in practice for all children to be able to experience its benefits.

Curriculum Issues and Government Policy

If the Government accepts the early childhood curriculum document as presently conceived, it will place Aotearoa-New Zealand at the forefront of early childhood curriculum internationally, as a curriculum that starts from early childhood, dovetails with the early school years, begins to define in some detail the goals of an early childhood curriculum, and has constructed a framework that reflects and celebrates cultural diversity and allows for variety. Some of the key issues the curriculum has addressed are as follows:

(i) An Ecological View of Early Childhood Curriculum

More than in any other sector, an ecological view of the definition of curriculum is appropriate for early childhood. Economic factors in the wider community influence the fees that can be charged, and therefore the equipment and staffing. The ripple effect that runs from the economic well-being of the nation, to the health and well-being of the families, to the well-being of the adults, to the curriculum of children at

home, has its parallel for early childhood centres. It is not enough to have an enlightened curriculum document; centres and families and the adults in them need to be supported at all levels. The ripple effect has a direct influence on curriculum: when a Government alters funding, staff ratios change, and this immediately impinges on the curriculum that adults can provide and the quantity and quality of assessments they can muster. When integrated 3-year training gave equal status to kindergarten and childcare, and acknowledged that the first 5 years warrant the same care and attention to the preparation of adults who will work with children as do the primary years, this too has had an effect on the curriculum in early childhood: in the last 10 years knowledge about child development and the capabilities of young and very young children has increased dramatically. Training programmes reflect this, and the new curriculum document does too. Research and new theoretical directions have confirmed what we have always known: experienced and informed adults are the key to good curriculum.

(ii) The Status of the Early Childhood Curriculum

The early childhood curriculum guidelines have been prepared as a document that will, we hope, be helpful for early childhood practitioners in preparing and evaluating their programmes, and for professional development of adults who work in early childhood. The concept of *Te Whariki*, or an early childhood programme as a weaving, implies that there is no set way to develop a programme. The relationship between the curriculum guidelines and the Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices for Chartered Early Childhood Services will need to be made more specific without becoming prescriptive.

(iii) A Curriculum Should Change and Develop

The process of curriculum development should merge with the process of professional development, and the consultation process during the development of *Te Whariki* began this. It will continue only if there is funding to support inservice training related to the curriculum, for adults to consider the ideas in the document: to recognise and affirm their current desirable curriculum objectives and practices and to reflect on and try out new directions. The process should allow adults in early childhood to hear their own voices in their curriculum document.

(iv) The Relationship with School

The ecological approach to a definition of curriculum includes an appreciation that school curriculum will influence early

childhood programmes. The early childhood curriculum document makes clear links with school, and with the new school curriculum documents.[12] The issue here is that such dovetailing or interconnecting will now need to be a two-way street, and initiatives in curriculum and assessment for the early school years, for example recommendations on the collection of information at school entry, will from now on need to take into account the curriculum for the first 5 years.[13] Teachers in primary schools and parents will need to have informed access to the early childhood guidelines if it is to be a living document that defines a curriculum that can make a difference to our children's lives.

In summary, it is evident that the role of Government in early childhood policy issues is becoming more intrusive and prescriptive. There is a delicate balance of this being a good or bad thing for early childhood. If this intrusion upholds and protects early childhood philosophy and supports and encourages quality programmes we will be fortunate. On the other hand if early childhood curriculum is co-opted for political or pedagogical reasons outside of the current needs of early childhood we will be less fortunate. The task of the early childhood community will be one of vigilance to ensure that the former is the case.

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WHAT CAN THE NORTH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE TEACH US IN THE 1990s?

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Introduction

Today I will talk about insights I gained from undertaking a placement with the Families and Work Institute in New York for 3 months at the end of last year. My focus was on childcare which in most instances includes nursery schools and Headstart programmes. I'm not therefore talking of all early childhood education services in the U.S. Notably absent, for example are kindergartens which many 5-year-olds attend.

Childcare plays a significant role in the education of young children. From 1970 to 1988 the proportion of employed mothers with a child under the age of 6 rose from 30% to 56%, and it is anticipated that by 1995 two-thirds of the nation's preschoolers will have mothers who are employed (Hofferth et al, 1991). In 1990, 28% of employed mothers said they used a childcare centre as their primary care arrangement. A further 20% used family day care programmes as their primary arrangement. Nearly half of the children of employed mothers are cared for by non-relatives in formal childcare settings.

Along with a dramatic increase in non-parental care for children while parents are employed, there has also been a rapid increase in preschool enrolments of young children of non-employed mothers, (see figure 1). Two out of every 5 American children under the age of 5 are in non-relative care settings.

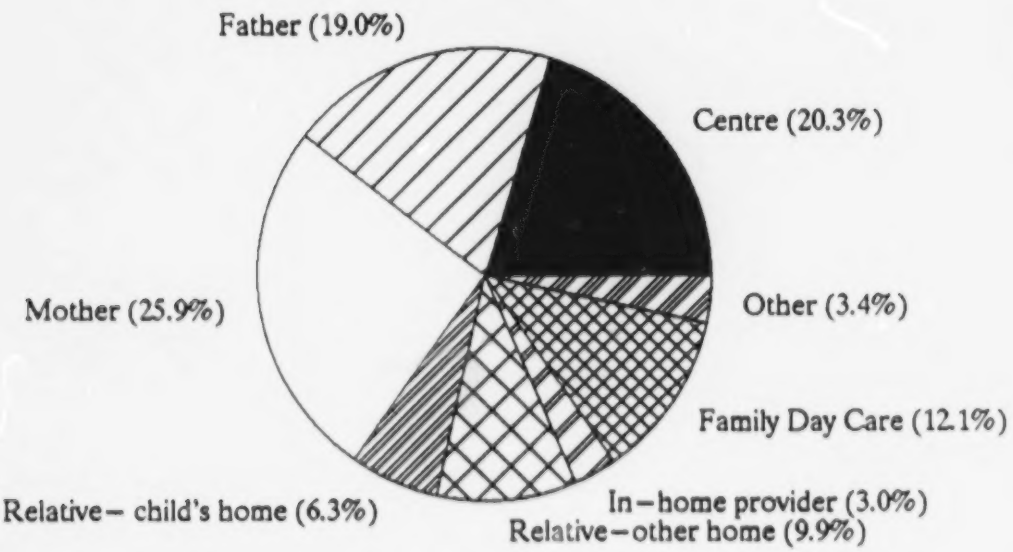
The increasing workforce participation of women with young children is only one of the many changes impacting on families in the U.S. Since 1970, significant social, demographic and economic changes have altered the form and the function of many American families.

Now:

- more children than at any time since the Great Depression live in families with one parent, usually their mothers,

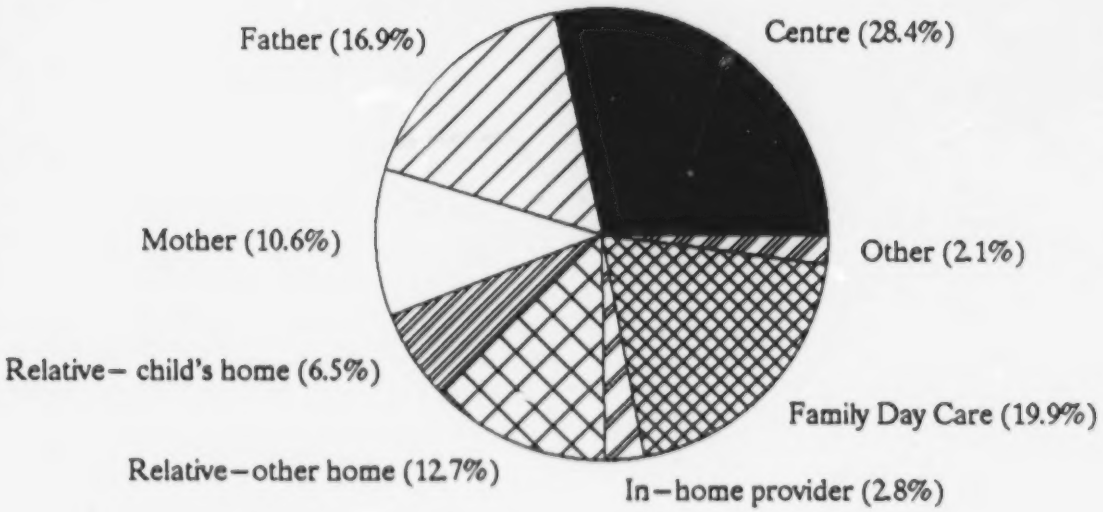
- more children than any other group in the population live below the poverty line,

FIGURE 1.1: CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT FOR YOUNGEST CHILD UNDER FIVE
TOTAL



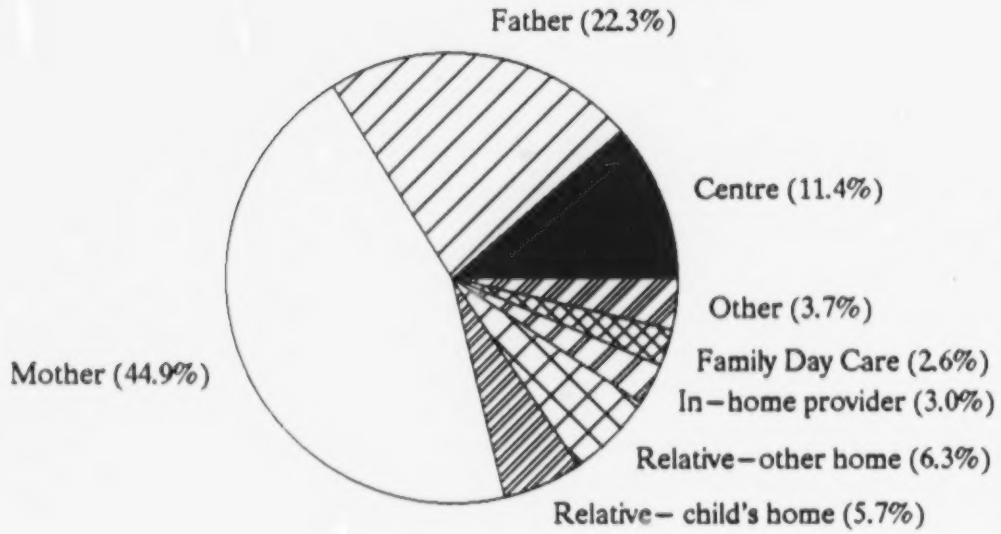
Other includes self–care and lessons
Source: National Child Care Survey, 1990

FIGURE 1.2: CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT FOR YOUNGEST CHILD UNDER FIVE EMPLOYED MOTHERS



Other includes self–care and lessons
Source: National Child Care Survey, 1990

FIGURE 1.3: CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT FOR YOUNGEST CHILD UNDER FIVE NONEMPLOYED MOTHER



Other includes self care and lessons
Source: National Child Care Survey, 1990

- one in 4 children fails to graduate from high school, and one in 4 who graduates is still functionally illiterate.

The growth in non-parental, and non-relative, care has occurred in an ad-hoc manner. The most striking characteristic of the existing out-of-home childcare is its diversity. Different types of programmes are governed by different regulatory authorities, and some providers are exempt because of the auspices under which they operate or the number of children they serve (see figure 2).

So how is the Government responding to these social and family changes, what is happening in childcare and what can we learn from this? I will focus on two key issues. For me these emphasise the primary policy debates which continue in the U.S. about cost and quality of care and the multiple objectives of early childhood education. I believe these issues also continue to be debated in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The first issue is quality of care and the consequent cost and return on investment in childcare for Government, children and parents. The second is the impact of the first education goal. This has brought childcare into the public eye as a key education issue. It has also helped create a climate of co-operation and collaboration to realise the benefits for all in achieving this goal.

Quality Care

Good quality care must have as its first objective the healthy development and education of children. Researchers have identified a number of key components in determining quality of care. The most crucial of these components are those which contribute to a positive relationship between the child and the caregiver: the number of children permitted in a group, the number of children per caregiver, and caregiver education and training. The caregiver/child relationship most affects a child's development. In addition, research has identified that any good service must attend to basic issues of health and safety and emphasise a partnership between parents and caregivers (Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

Government's Role in Childcare

Government is primarily a funder and regulator of childcare. In 1998, the Federal Government invested $6.6 billion in childcare, with $4 billion of this being expended via the tax system in tax credits to individual users of care (Galinsky and Friedman, forth coming). The last decade has seen a significant shift in federal funding from a supply-side strategy (funds distributed directly to childcare providers)

FIGURE 2

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM DISTINCTIONS

LOCATION	
In-Home:	The child learns and is cared for in his or her own home. Three percent of the children who are under five with employed mothers are in non-relative in-home care.[17]
Family Child Care:	Child care is provided for up to 5 or 6 children in the home of the provider. In group family child care, up to 10 or 12 children are cared for in the home of the provider with the assistance of another adult. Twenty percent of the children under five with employed mothers are in family child care, with non-relatives.[18]
Center:	The child learns and is cared for in a child care center. Centers generally refer to full-day programs. Putting centers, nursery schools, and preschools together, 28 percent of children under five with employed mothers use some type of center based care including nursery schools and preschools.[19]
Nursery School:	Nursery schools typically offer part-day programs. Some nursery schools have extended hours, providing full working day education and care.
School:	Fifty-one percent of three and four year olds are in public and private pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. Ninety percent of five year olds attend school, 70 percent in public schools, generally for part-day programs.[20] Schools also provide before - and after-school programs.
Church/ Synagogue:	The program takes place at the site of a religious organization, sometimes sponsored by the denomination and sometimes simply housed there. While up to 60 percent of center-based child care is located in religious organizations, only 15 percent are sponsored by churches or synagogues.[21]
Workplace:	The program is housed at or near the parents' workplace. This is called on-site or near-site care. In 1990, 13 percent of the nations largest employers sponsored on- or near-site child care centers. They may be owned and operated by the company or by an outside contractor.[22]

HOURS OF OPERATION	
24 Hour:	The program is open round the clock. Sometimes used by hospitals and police departments whose employees work all night and day. Such programs are quite rare.
Full Working Day:	The program's hours match the parents' scheduled work hours. Usually the program is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but can vary, depending on employee need. Overall, 94 percent of regulated family child care homes and 69 percent of centers provide full working day coverage.[23]
Full School Day:	The program's hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or otherwise match the hours that local public schools are open.
Part School Day:	Such programs are open two to three hours, in the mornings or afternoons.

For comparability with previous studies, all figures cited from the National Child Care Survey 1990 refer to the youngest child.

FIGURE 2 Continued

PROVIDERS	
The terms "teachers" and "child care providers" are sometimes used interchangeably.	
Relative:	Eighteen percent of children under five who are the youngest among their siblings and whose mothers work, are cared for by relatives, and 28 percent by the parents themselves.[24]
Non-relative:	Neighbors, friends and professionals unrelated to the child are used by just over half of the employed mothers with children under five.
FUNDING SOURCE	
Parents:	Parents pay 76 percent of center-based child care.[25]
Local, state, and federal governments:	Of the estimated $20 billion child care industry (including fees, referrals, licensing, etc.) the federal government contributed approximately $7.7 billion, including the additional $1.1 billion from new federal child care legislation that reached the states.[26] It is hard to determine state and local spending because consistent records are not kept.
Employers:	Employers may subsidize employees' child care expenses directly or use a tax mechanism to help parents offset costs. Corporate contributions to local child care programs may reduce fees charged to parents.
United Way:	In 1990, 7.1 percent of total giving to United Way was allocated to child care.[27]
AUSPICES	
Non-profit:	65 percent of child care centers are non-profit, 35 percent are for-profit.[28]

Source: E. Galinsky and D. E. Friedman, 1993.

to a demand-side strategy (funds distributed to parents through vouchers or the tax system) (see figure 3).

A 1987 study by the Congressional Budget Office concluded that although lower-income families would benefit more from supply-side subsidies, demand-side emphasis has meant that "a disproportionately larger share of federal childcare dollars has been going to middle- and upper-income families in recent years, and consequently there has been a growing inequity in the distribution of federal childcare benefits" (Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

This shift has meant that over this period funds have moved from primarily supporting low-income families (who received 80% of federal childcare dollars in 1972), to primarily benefiting middle- and upper-income families (Hayes, Palmer and Zaslow, 1990). Increasingly businesses are also offering their employees subsidies through DCAPs (Dependent Care Assistance Plans). These are flexible benefit packages which enable an employee to use up to $5000/year pre-tax dollars to pay for their care.

Infrastructure subsidies, which generally benefit all income groups, are a very small but growing area of federal expenditures. State Governments regulate care and provide an array of consumer, provider and infrastructure subsidies. The amount spent on childcare at a state level varies considerably. California provides approximately $315 million, 9 times more than the next most generous state (Hayes, Palmer and Zaslow 1990).

State licensing regulations in the U.S. aim to set a floor of protection for children not to promote good quality care (Hofferth and Phillips, 1991). There is, however, much variation in the type of care that is regulated and the level of regulation that is imposed. Good regulation does not by itself assure quality, but makes its existence more likely.

All states do specify staff:child ratios, but 25 have no group size requirements for infants and toddlers, and 5 have none for preschoolers. Sixteen states require no training for child caregivers in centres and 40 have no training requirements for family day care providers. The Profile of Child Care Settings Study (cited in Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming) found that a number of programmes do not meet their own state standards for group size or staff:child ratios. This is often because of the difficulties of enforcing standards: licensing officials may be insufficiently trained or have impossibly high case loads. Budget cutbacks have also tended to diminish state licensing capacity. Those programmes not meeting state regulation standards often fall

FIGURE 3

FEDERAL SPENDING FOR CHILD CARE, 1977-1988

PROGRAM	ADMINISTERING AGENCY	FEDERAL SPENDING (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)			
		1977	1980	1984	1988
Title XX (Social Services Block Grants)	Department of Health and Human Services	809[a]	600[c,d]	535[c]	660[g,h]
Head Start	Department of Health and Human Services	448[a]	735[c]	996[c]	1,206[g,h]
Area Economic and Human Resource Development Program	Appalachian Regional Commission	9[a]	11[d]	1[e]	0[g,h]
Child Care Food Program	Department of Agriculture	120[a]	217[c]	357[e]	586[h]
Job Training Partnership Act *	Department of Labor	-	-	9[c]	9[g,h]
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (work-expense disregard) *	Department of Health and Human Services	84[a]	60[c]	35[c]	44[g]
Work Incentive Program	Department of Health and Human Services	57[a]	115[c]	13[c]	9[g]
Food Stamps (dependent care deduction) *	Department of Agriculture	35[f]	35[f]	35[f]	50[f,g,h]
Tax Exclusion for Employer-Provided Child Care *	Internal Revenue Service	-	-	40[c]	65[g,h]
	Subtotal	**1,562**	**1,773**	**2,021**	**2,629**
	(1988 dollars)	**(3,055)**	**(2,542)**	**(2,299)**	**(2,629)**
Child Care Tax Credit *	Internal Revenue Service	521[b]	956[b]	2,649[b]	3,920[g,h]
	Total	**2,083**	**2,729**	**4,670**	**6,549**
	(1988 dollars)	**(4,061)**	**(3,912)**	**(5,312)**	**(6,549)**

***Source:** P. K. Robins, "Federal Financing of Child Care: Alternative Approaches and Economic Implications," Paper prepared for the Conference, "Economic Implications and Benefits of Child Care" January 1988.

Note: Data are for the fiscal year except for the Child Care Tax Credit, which is measured over the calendar year.

References:

[a] U.S. Congress (1978; Table 9).

[b] U.S. Department of Treasury (1977, 1980, 1984).

[c] Private communication from William Prosser, Department of Health and Human Services.

[d] Kahn and Kamerman (1987; Table 1.8).

[e] Stephan and Schillmoeller (1987).

[f] Based on quality control data from the Food and Nutrition Service, courtesy of Julie Isaacs, Congressional Budget Office.

[g] Besharov and Tramontozzi (1988).

[h] U.S. Department of Labor (1988).

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far short of them. For example, centres not meeting group size or staff child:ratios have, on average, group sizes and ratios twice as bad as the mandated standard.

The Government's primary funding role is one of supporting parents in their choices of care. The major exception to this in federal expenditure is funding to Headstart. As the only federally supported service, Headstart receives funds for services that are primarily part-day programmes for children from "disadvantaged" backgrounds. The Headstart programme is considered to be a fairly good-quality programme. But, less than 30% of eligible children attend Headstart and, with parents increasingly involved in paid work, the hours are frequently unsuitable. The Clinton administration is expected to increase spending on Headstart for extension to the programme, both in hours and to cover more children.

Parent Costs and Choices

Among those parents who pay for care, between 6% and 25% of their income is spent on childcare. Employed mothers of a preschooler spend about 11% of their weekly family income on childcare. Single mothers and poor families, while less likely to pay for care, spend a substantially greater proportion of their income than 2-parent or non-poor families. For example, single mothers spend 20% of their income, and families with annual incomes under $15,000 spend 22-25% of their income on childcare. Few families (5%) claim they receive direct financial assistance with their childcare expenses. In contrast, 35% of employed parents claim the federal Child and Dependent Care Credit (Hofferth et al, 1991).

The number of childcare centres tripled between 1976-1990, serving between 4 and 5.1 million children. Family childcare homes cater for a further 4 million (with 3.4 million children in unregulated care). At the time of the national childcare study in 1990, however, 80% of the regulated care spaces were filled, suggesting centres and family childcare provisions were close to being full. Over 40% of places are unregulated.

Parents surveyed in the National Child Care Study (Hofferth et al., 1991) stated what they considered important in choosing a centre or family day care arrangement. The single most frequently cited factor was a warm and loving provider (28% of centre users and 37% of family childcare users). Approximately 60% of parents cited some aspect of quality (including a loving provider); availability aspects were mentioned by 22% of those using family day care and 29% of those using centre care; fewer than 10% mentioned cost as their most important consideration. Among those citing quality as their most

important criterion, characteristics of the provider or staff were the most frequently mentioned with far fewer identifying group or programme attributes.

Parents were also questioned about their decision to select current arrangements for childcare. A comparison can be made about what parents say is important, and what they do. It appears they select care that is close to home, which costs less and which is equal in quality to the types they rejected. Other research has similarly identified that parental perceptions of both price and quality of care are associated with the care they choose, with price more important than quality (Hofferth and Phillips, 1991).

A study which examines mothers' perception of quality dimensions found mothers report high levels of satisfaction with relatively low-quality care. In particular, mothers did not perceive group size, child:teacher ratio or staff training as being associated with satisfactory care for their children (Shin et al, 1990).

And, interestingly, a 1985 study revealed that parents who purchased better quality care did not pay more than other parents (Hayes, Palmer and Zaslow, 1990). This finding can be interpreted to mean either that better quality care was not more expensive than lesser quality care, or that parents did not in fact value the characteristics of quality care as highly as they valued other characteristics (such as location and hours of operation).

So how satisfied are parents with their care arrangements? For the most part, parents report that they are satisfied. In one study of centre users in Atlanta, 95% reported being satisfied. However, when these mothers were asked if they would select the programme they were currently using again if other options were available, 53% said no, a significant number, given how difficult it is for parents to admit that their child is in a less than optimal situation (cited in Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

There is no doubt that parents face difficult decisions about the care arrangements for their children:

- there is limited care available (particularly for infants and toddlers),

- the cost of care is significant,

- difficulty with transport more severely limits choice,

- there is limited information available to parents about what constitutes good care for children.

The state has a significant interest in ensuring the continued workforce participation of parents, and that care of at least an adequate quality is used to enhance children's current and future development. Current concern with a projected decline in the size of the labour force from a declining birth rate and an aging population may mean we see an increased role being taken by Government in protecting its interests.

Who is Affected by Poor Quality?

Research on the benefits of early childhood education and care has concentrated on children from low socioeconomic background and has found that they, in fact, do benefit more than those from quality programmes. However, research on the detrimental effects of poor quality programmes shows that a higher socioeconomic background does not shield children from low quality arrangements. Children, rich and poor alike, have been shown to suffer ill effects when they are crowded in programmes, when they receive little individualised attention, and when they wander aimlessly or are pressured into inappropriate activities. One recent study has also shown that even strong family circumstances could not buffer a child from the impact of low quality childcare (cited in Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

States have tended to target programmes for so-called "at risk" children because research has indicated that poorer children gain the most, middle-income families already tend to use early childhood programmes, and because state budgets constrain available funds. The National Child Care Staffing Study in 1990, however, found that middle-income children are in the poorest quality centre-based programmes with the worst staff:child ratios, least trained staff, least developmentally appropriate activities and highest staff turnover. Policy makers need to reconsider their role in defining quality as an issue solely for children from low-income families (cited in Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

Some are also arguing that programmes targeted purely at disadvantaged children have negative effects in terms of labelling children, creation of de facto segregation and because children learn best within a diverse group.

The National Child Care Staffing Study found that children in programmes with high staff turnover achieved less in social and language development. High turnover in the childcare profession is one of the largest problems and recruitment of

staff is becoming increasingly problematic. As the relationship between the caregiver and the child is so important to achieving a high quality outcome, the problem of retaining and attracting staff is critical (Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming).

The field has become less attractive to young people who can find employment that offers better pay, more respect and no fingerprint checks. An estimated 60% of family day care providers and 41% of centre caregivers and assistants leave the field every year (cited in Galinsky and Friedman, forthcoming). Not surprisingly, childcare workers' wages were one of the most important predictors of children's development and teacher retention.

While less than half of the women in the total U.S. labour force have attended college, more than half of the assistant teachers and almost three-quarters of the teachers in childcare programmes had some college background. Despite these staff attributes, the average 1988 hourly wage in a childcare centre was $5.35, which amounts to $9,363 per year. The 1988 poverty threshold for a family of 4 was $9,431. A quarter of full-time staff found it necessary to work a second job.

When comparisons are made between studies of teacher education over the last 15 years, it can be seen that teachers have increased the amount and level of their training. There has, however, been a striking decline in salaries. Teachers' salaries have dropped by 27%, assistants' by 20% and childcare staff earned significantly less than comparably educated men and women.

The Child Care Staffing Study found that for-profit centres have a higher turnover rate than non-profit centres; 56% as compared to 30%. Those centres functioning as part of a chain experienced an even higher turnover rate of 70%.

Lessons for Aotearoa/New Zealand

The U.S. provides us with a salutary reminder that parents could do with some assistance in making their care choices and that the market is not on its own likely to supply enough or the right kind of care. Making information available to parents on what to look for in an early education service is part of the problem. Ensuring they familiarise themselves with it, use it and place quality issues above all others in their choice of care is unrealistic, and maybe unreasonable. Parents cannot be expected to know and anticipate all the likely impacts for their child. These issues are not fully accounted for in traditional market-based analysis of

childcare (Hofferth and Phillips, 1991).

Generally our level of regulation and monitoring is superior to that in most U.S. states. The maintenance (and advancement) of standards through charters and ongoing service reviews are essential to ensuring our early childhood investments are wisely made.

We have not been affected to the same extent as the U.S. by the increasing participation of women in the paid workforce and in training. We are, however, following similar trends. Mothers with a youngest child between the ages of 1 and 4 have increased their workforce participation from 22% to 41% between 1976 and 1991 (Social Monitoring Group, 1989; Department of Statistics, 1992). The usage of childcare centres has also increased markedly, with nearly a 20% increase in the number of children attending from 1990 to 1991. The latest Education Review Office annual report noted that early childhood programmes tend to be adult directed (as opposed to child centred) and little account is taken of the developmental appropriateness for individuals (ERO, 1992). The quality of care that services can provide will increasingly affect more and more children. Where previously we believed more "disadvantaged" children were most affected, children of the middle classes are also at risk.

The funding mechanisms used for childcare/early childhood education play a crucial role in determining whether parents and society benefit. A 1992 Harvard study examined the independent influence of childcare policies on childcare centre quality. They particularly sought to assess the impacts of supply subsidies, tax credits and regulations. They identified that centre quality is generally higher in centres receiving greater subsidies. The effect of the subsidies varied depending on the quality indicator observed. For example, higher staff salaries, better qualified staff and more parent involvement, but lower staff:child ratios, were found in more highly subsidised centres. State regulation and tax credit utilisation held little independent influence on centre quality (Fuller, Raudenbush, and Wei, 1992).

Teachers/caregivers are central to a stable service infrastructure, yet pay and conditions in the U.S. are such that many leave the profession after a short time. This situation is not unlike what is occurring in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Arresting any "staffing crisis" before it occurs will be important in ensuring a good quality service infrastructure is not devastated to the extent it has become in North America.

I don't want to give the impression that nothing is happening

community planning initiatives that were occurring around the country and the ways in which these communities assessed their needs and worked together effectively to achieve the desired outcomes for young children and their families.

To a large extent this type of initiative has developed as a response to alarming poverty levels, health statistics and the increased (economic) need to ensure that every child is given the best start in life since the labour force is contracting. The readiness goal has further increased the legitimacy of such approaches. There are also literally hundreds of different funding streams to support early care and education, different regulations apply to different service types, and there is little or no attempt to co-ordinate service development with demand or to ensure that existing resource use is maximised. There have also been some philosophical shifts in social service planning and delivery in recent years which promote community responsibility and decentralised decision making.

These initiatives are largely focused on outcomes relating to the health and well-being of children and their families. Others are more specifically related to childcare, and particularly the development of some sort of early childhood care and education system.

Communities (usually on a county or city basis) have often established some form of leadership group that includes all key players from parents, providers and policy makers through to community leaders and employers. These groups undertake some form of assessment of what is happening in their communities, particularly identifying where gaps and significant problems are. A wide range of mechanisms have been used to gain a picture of where their communities are and many creative solutions arrived at due to the collaborative approach.

Relevance to New Zealand

A significant issue in establishing care and education policy for preschool and school age children concerns the many objectives that policy seeks to address. These include early education, increasing labour market opportunities for mothers in particular, respite care for mothers, and the reduction of barriers for those seeking to move from welfare benefits to employment. Multiple objectives will always exist, and the balance given to each will be politically determined on a national basis regardless of what local conditions might indicate.

We have a care and education system that has grown

in the U.S. to improve the quality of care. There are a multitude of efforts. Brief outlines of a few are attached in Appendix 1.

The First Education Goal

The first National Education Goal adopted by the President and the nation's Governors states that:

> By the Year 2000, All Children in America Will Start School Ready to Learn.

This is the first of 6 education goals that seek to promote changes intended to boost school readiness, student achievement, graduation rates, safety in schools and lifelong learning.

Many in the early childhood sector were unhappy with the first goal as they feared it would lead to inappropriate achievement testing and that children would be placed under pressure to "perform" from a very young age. However, as professionals and advocates have worked with state agencies to clarify the goal, and how it might be implemented and evaluated, a tremendous opportunity has been grasped.

The unnatural division between care and education is being broken down as it is seen that childcare is a valuable contributor to achieving school readiness along with the fact that children are increasingly cared for by people other than their parents before they start school.

The first goal has also focused attention on the significance of the early childhood period in the education system, and in many instances brought early childhood issues to the education table for the first time.

Professionals and academics have been challenged to consider appropriate definitions and mechanisms for assessing what school readiness might be. A broad definition has been adopted that is based on physical health, cognitive and general knowledge, self-confidence and social competence. School readiness is also not seen as something based solely on the capacities of young children but is shaped and developed by people and environments. As such, a number of approaches need to be used in assessing readiness (Prince, 1992; the Report of the National Task Force on School Readiness, 1991; Report of the Action Team on School Readiness, 1992).

To a large extent the first education goal has also influenced the proliferation of community planning and collaborative ventures. Much of my placement was spent in identifying

haphazardly. Different services may have adopted growth strategies but, given the huge dependence on community support and parent involvement, services have developed where parents have initiated them. One of our strengths must be in the diversity of service types that have arisen. Given increasing concern to ensure that investments are maximised and that gaps and overlaps are minimised, it may be timely to consider how Aotearoa/New Zealand might take a longer term co-ordinated strategic approach.

Given our great diversity of services it doesn't seem useful to me for us to adopt a strategy focused on numbers of childcare places as has been done in Australia. A mechanism which is based on community experience would seem more appropriate. It could provide a framework for a strategy for service development, that maximised the use of existing resources, and ensured that local priorities for different services are realised.

States that are adopting such strategies in the U.S. have tended to establish frameworks and guidelines for communities to follow so that state wide policies still apply, with locally determined priorities, innovation and objectives.

A national strategy based on community assessment and planning could identify the different levels of responsibility, the outcomes sought for children and families, and the strategic framework. Some resources would be necessary to facilitate local planning and for implementation of the collaborative plans. Some may argue that this is not a priority at present. And it may not be. I believe we do need to ensure that all those who are benefiting from the existence of early childhood education need to be involved in its future in a legitimate way.

(Refer report of the National Task Force on School Readiness, 1991. I also have additional materials on Indiana's "Step Ahead", Connecticut's "Kids Count", Colorado's "First Impressions", and the West Virginia Family Resource Networks.)

Conclusion

The key lesson for us with regard to quality lies not so much in what to do, but what to make sure we avoid. We can learn from current research in the U.S. on quality impacts, particularly as the group affected by poor quality appears to be expanding to include middle class children.

The U.S. provides us with an example of a strongly market driven policy philosophy. We need to learn from the gains, as well as the losses, of this approach. From my perspective,

there are too many losses when such a single minded approach is adopted. The market is not providing an adequate standard of care, nor do parents necessarily "demand" better on behalf of their children. I find mechanisms which also improve the likelihood of parents being able to choose good-quality care is critical. The investment of children's lives and of parent and Government funds cannot be seen to be providing an adequate return.

Recognising the multiple objectives of early childhood policy does mean that a variety of Government mechanisms may be necessary to ensure that all do benefit in their preschool years. The U.S., along with a number of other countries we frequently compare ourselves with, is clearly behind us in recognising multiple objectives. The first education goal, while many argue it is poorly worded, has provided a significant impetus for a concerted effort among all those concerned that children benefit from childcare experiences.

While we have identified the dual care and education functions that all early childhood services play in meeting the needs of children, their parents and society, we cannot become complacent about the importance of good quality services or the combined responsibility for ensuring their existence and use. All those that benefit, including Government, parents, communities, and probably also employers, have crucial roles to play in determining our future.

It will be interesting to observe what changes occur as the U.S. comes to grips with a declining birth rate, aging population and poor education outcomes. Increasingly I heard it said that the U.S. can no longer afford "failures" in its education system. Every child must count.

APPENDIX ONE

Examples of Quality Improvement Projects in the U.S.

1 NAEYC Full Costs of Quality Campaign - an education campaign that identifies the social costs of poor quality care as compared to the costs of providing high quality care. NAEYC is the professional association for the early childhood field and it provides suggestions for action along with resource information. The campaign aims to promote understanding and support for high quality programmes for young children and their families. Assistance is provided to enable programmes and communities to assess what the full costs of providing quality programmes are and how to meet these costs.

2 The American Business Collaborative for Quality Dependent Care - launched in September 1992, the ABC is composed of over 150 companies. Each is contributing funds to create a pool of $25 million that will be distributed over the next 2 years. Funds are going to dependent care programmes in 50 cities across the U.S. that employees of the contributors use. The funds are specifically focused to improve the quality of care. Business is finding that it is not getting the returns it expects, from care programmes, and that this is largely due to the quality of programmes.

3 Accreditation - both NAEYC and the American Family Day Care Association have developed voluntary quality assessment processes for centres and family day care providers. Providers are expected to meet specific quality standards, that are reviewed by peers, and a national basis. Accredited services can advertise their status and act as a model for good quality. AT & T (telephone company) will meet the costs of accreditation for any service that their employees use.

4 A public-private partnership in New York state, where grants from an investment fund are awarded to projects which improve the supply or quality of childcare.

5 The Family to Family project funded by the Dayton Hudson Foundation, Mervyn's and Target Stores, seeks to increase the supply and the quality of family childcare in 32 communities across the U.S. In each community, training courses are provided to family day care providers, accreditation is promoted, local provider associations are created or strengthened, and consumer education activities are conducted.

6 A number of large companies have initiated childcare development funds, e.g., AT & T, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, and promoted collaboration with other companies to improve the supply and quality of child- and elder-care.

7 The Early Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) funded by the AT & T Foundation, this project is a 3-year effort in which communities will serve as partners with the Families and Work Institute to:

- assess the adequacy and the efficiency of their current childcare and early education systems in promoting quality for children (using the Quality Audit tool),
- develop workable plans for systemic improvements that promote healthy child development, school readiness and family well-being (Quality Improvement Plans),
- put those plans into action,
- participate in an evaluation of their impact.

This project emphasises system improvement to improve quality over individual programme improvement because of the need for fundamental strengthening of the infrastructure and other delivery system components before high quality programmes can be created and maintained over time.

8 The Worthy Wages Campaign is a 5-year grassroots effort to empower childcare employees and providers to mobilise and reverse the staffing crisis. They are aiming to inform the American public and political leaders that:

- the nation's childcare system must have a level of funding that meets the true cost of providing quality care,
- employees can no longer keep a poorly funded system afloat by working for substandard pay,
- childcare compensation is a problem that must be solved.

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GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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The personal views expressed in this paper are based on my experience of working in early education, in the tertiary sector in Western Australia (W.A.), for the past 11 years. The Government policies to which I refer were current in January 1993; any changes which result from the recent change of government in Western Australia (6 February 1993) are unknown. My two initial impressions of early childhood programmes in New Zealand, firstly, the integrated nature of early childhood services, and secondly, the absence of policies relating to preschool-school continuity, are in marked contrast to the situation in Western Australia where a distinction between care and education is reflected in the services available for young children, and preschool facilities are primarily school-based. Both characteristics reflect state government policy.

Structure of Early Childhood Provisions in W.A.

Two sectors provide programmes for children prior to formal schooling. **Early childhood education** is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and covers preschools, pre-primary centres, and Aboriginal preschools. **Early childhood services** are the responsibility of the Department for Community Development and include full day care, family day care and sessional family centres for 4-year-olds. Parent-run playgroups may receive funding under the family centre regulations if they conform with those regulations.

The distinction between education and care reflected in this administrative arrangement is consistent with the long-standing differentiation of education and care provisions which has characterised the development of services for young children in Australia (Alderson, 1992; Goodnow & Burns, 1984; Stonehouse, 1992). In May, 1992, the W.A. Government signalled its intention to widen early childhood provisions, through its Social Advantage policy (Govt of W.A., 1992) which referred to "a more flexible provision of early childhood programs to meet the varying needs of parents". The introduction of federal funding in 1991 to allow childcare centres to employ early childhood teachers to provide "educational" programmes for 5-year-olds is one example of increased flexibility which has reduced the questionable practice of childcare children "commuting" from full day care

to sessional preschool or pre-primary programmes for part of the day. Notwithstanding the positive intentions of the Social Advantage policy, the Government's decision to locate all services for 0 to 4s within the Department for Community Development does seem directly opposed to their goal of flexibility. Further, the policy decision to provide programmes, deemed to be "activity" rather than "educational", for 4-year-olds in family centres, maintains an arbitrary distinction in type of programme which is indefensible on the basis of sound early childhood principles (see, for example, the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987).

Government Policy and Professional Concerns

1. School-based Preschool Education. All children in Australia are provided with a year's non-compulsory preschool education in the year prior to school entry. In W.A., children commence school in the year in which they turn 6, with a single point of entry in February. The preschool year for 5-year olds (i.e., year in which the child turns 5) also has a single point of entry in February. The majority of 5-year-olds in preschool programmes attend pre-primary centres which are attached to primary schools, as off-site or on-site centres; the remainder attend community-based preschools, or pre-primary classes attached to private schools in the independent or Catholic sectors. Currently, 4-year-olds may attend preschools or pre-primary centres if places are available, although this provision is to be phased out over the next 3 years. All preschool provisions, state or independent, are governed by state-imposed regulations with regard to facilities, type of programme, and teacher qualifications; monitoring of these is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. These regulations originated with the old Preschool Board which controlled preschools prior to the mid 1970s, when the expansion of preschool education in W.A. led to the development of school-based pre-primary centres. In 1991, the W.A. Labor Government announced that it would move towards a full-day pre-primary programme for 5-year-olds, to be phased in over 3 years from 1993. Community preschools will be phased out, to be replaced by family centre programmes for 4-year-olds, while pre-primary centres will cater for 5-year-olds.

Pre-primary and preschool centres are staffed by 3-year trained teachers with a Diploma of Teaching or BA in Early Childhood Education, and an untrained teacher's assistant. Aboriginal preschools, which cater for 4- and 5-year-olds, and schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal children, also have an Aboriginal teacher's assistant. Early childhood teachers are trained to teach 3- to 8-year-olds and have

salary equity with primary teachers. If employed in a part-time pre-primary position, an early childhood teacher may be required to teach in the junior primary classes for the remainder of the week. Recent changes in the Ministry's employment policy allow early childhood teachers to transfer to the junior primary sector, a move which is beginning to improve their career prospects. At the same time, tertiary institutions have introduced graduate level early childhood courses to cater for early childhood personnel requiring further qualifications for promotion purposes. One W.A. university is introducing a 0 - 8 training programme for early childhood teachers; however, this does not replace the separate childcare course offered by the Technical and Further Education Colleges.

Pre-primary education, while still non-compulsory, is moving towards "first year of school" status. This trend is apparent in several ways. In 1983, a Committee of Inquiry into Education in W.A. (1984) recommended that attention be given to continuity of preschool and early school programmes. Since that time, primary curriculum guidelines have been rewritten to include the pre-primary level (i.e., K). Providers of preservice training have faced continued pressure, from both state and federal levels, to increase studies of curriculum content in early childhood teacher education courses (e.g., mathematics, science and technology). In W.A., early childhood school development officers, most of whom are primary-trained, advise teachers across the K - 2 levels, a practice which has raised concerns about inappropriate practices being promoted at the pre-primary level. On the positive side, "network" meetings of K - 2 teachers in school districts provide professional contact for early childhood teachers which is not so readily available to teachers working in a community-based system. Similarly, the availability of Ministry allowances for basic resources and equipment reduces the time which was often required for fund-raising in community centres.

Moves towards a National Curriculum and Competency Standards in the compulsory years of schooling, are having their impact at the pre-primary level, raising concerns about a thrust towards uniformity, standardisation, and fragmentation within the early childhood profession (Cahir, 1992) which is antithetical to early childhood principles. For example, a longitudinal project in a Perth Junior primary school concerned with promoting continuity K - 2 through the implementation of developmental programming (Rice & Cullen, 1993), was initially queried by Ministry personnel because it did not conform to the Ministry's "outcomes" focus. Accordingly, procedures were initiated to monitor children's progress from the K level. These records on children were

used constructively to promote a developmental programme across the 3 years of early schooling. In this regard, the project is consistent with thinking reflected in recent publications of the Schools Council of the National Board of Employment, Education, and Training which promote a strong developmental approach in the early years of schooling (e.g., Schools Council, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). The risk remains, however, that the Ministry outcomes policy which includes the decision to initiate a testing programme at age 8 could influence early years' teachers to "teach to the test" (Alderson, 1992; Fleer, 1992).

In summary, the tensions between political agendas and professional concerns are highly evident in recent moves in early education. In particular, the contrasting emphases of politically-driven moves towards a national curriculum and competency standards and the Schools Council's discussion documents, which received strong professional input, including that of the Australian Early Childhood Association, illustrate the wide disparity of political and professional thinking.

2. National Training Reform Agenda. The childcare sector has also been affected by national moves towards the implementation of competency-based standards (Gifford & Godhard, 1992). This move is part of a wider national agenda in which current educational policy emphasises a direct relationship between education and work (Angus, 1992). Accordingly, training providers for childcare are rewriting courses in competency-based form. For example, in W.A. the recent accreditation of the 2-year Associate Diploma in Social Sciences (Child Care) received strong input from industry, in order to define "the essential skills the industry requires of childcare workers". Several concerns with regard to early childhood provisions in W.A. arise from this move towards competency-based training. Childcare workers with an Associate Diploma are currently granted 1 year's advanced standing (i.e., equivalency) in the BA (Early Childhood Education) in the two W.A. universities which train early childhood teachers. In practice, this has posed problems for students because of the increasing emphasis on curriculum in the ECE courses which has not been present in the integrated childcare course. The move to competency-based criteria is likely to exacerbate this problem if the division between childcare and early education widens as the two sectors become controlled by different bodies, regulations and sets of competency standards.

A competency-based approach may also be inimical to goals concerned with the development of reflective teachers (Cullen, 1991) or a critical approach to education, critical inquiry and social justice (Angus, 1992). Similar concerns have been

raised about the Preschool and Child Care Curriculum Guidelines in the state of Victoria (Fell, 1992). It is ironical that at a time when both the Ministry of Education and the Department for Community Development are promoting broader goals of social justice, through Ministry curriculum statements and the Social Advantage Policy, that policy emphasis on training should narrow the perspectives of early childhood professionals to measurable skills and performance indicators. Moreover, the establishment of national competency-based standards in childcare seems likely to exacerbate the structural separation of early childhood professionals working in childcare from those working in the early years of schooling (Cahir, 1992). In a profession which is already marked by structural separatism, this additional source of differentiation, in the form of standards which will be governed by different bodies and regulations, can only be seen as detrimental to integrity of the early childhood profession.

Research Issues and Government Policy

In W.A., recent major policy decisions affecting early childhood provisions have emanated from the political level with limited professional input to decision-making processes. Research has also played an insignificant role at any stage of the implementation process. This is illustrated by the Ministry's decision to proceed with plans to introduce full-day programmes for 5-year-olds, despite protests from parent groups and professional organisations, and calls for pilot programmes prior to the full implementation. Indeed, system-level research has been minimal since the Research Branch in the former Department of Education was disbanded during the changeover to Ministry status in 1987.

The paucity of research-guided policy has created challenges for early childhood researchers. There are encouraging signs that academic researchers are developing collaborative forms of research which have the potential to contribute constructively to developments originating at the political level. One example is the continuity project described earlier (Rice & Cullen, 1993); others include research on road safety teaching methods with preschoolers, the use of computers in preschools, and the development of curriculum packages for full-day programmes. According to Bradley and Sanson (1992) a characteristic of this "partnership" model of research is the provision "to centrally involve practitioners in the process of research" (p. 9). A further critical component, of course, is the sensitivity of policy-makers to

the findings of such partnership research, and their willingness to modify policy on this basis.

New Zealand - Western Australian Comparisons

Considerable differences exist between early education in New Zealand and W.A. New Zealand's community-based model is not suited to the vast geographical area covered by W.A.'s early childhood services. In W.A., the bureaucracy, while often criticised, has been necessary to maintain resources and staff in rural areas. Even in metropolitan areas, parent preference for an "educational" provision has moved services away from a parent-involvement model promoted by the Department for Community Development (e.g., parents who employ an early childhood teacher to take a playgroup; family centre parent committees which choose to employ an early childhood teacher and untrained aide to parallel preschool provisions, instead of the two qualified childcare workers allowed by the bulk-funding).

Although the W.A. provisions differ so markedly from those in New Zealand, there are some aspects of the W.A. system which warrant consideration in this country. The integrated community-based system of early childhood education, to a newcomer, is also accompanied by a strong feeling of "separatism" between early childhood education and the first years of school. This characteristic is illustrated by the separate development of national curriculum guidelines at the primary and early childhood levels. Although the latest draft of the Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines incorporates a section which explores links between early childhood and school curricula, this was due more to the goodwill of the early childhood professionals involved in the project than to explicit continuity policy. I would like to see early childhood and primary colleagues collaborating on a project which addresses continuity concerns. In a school system where a continuous entry policy operates and children arrive at school without a familiar cohort of peers, it is arguable that even more attention should be given to continuity than in a system with a single entry policy, as in W.A.. Further, research on young learners indicates a need for primary teachers to build upon the knowledge and skills which young children bring to school (Cullen, 1991; Young-Loveridge, 1989).

I am also aware that aspects of professionalism seem to be further developed Australia-wide, than in New Zealand. In W.A., the qualification structure, while not without its discontinuities, does support the professional development and career mobility of early childhood personnel. The growth of professionalism has also been fostered by the Australian Early

Childhood Association (AECA) which brings together the interests of the diverse groups involved in early education. For example, the AECA's publications; its submissions on the proposed National Child Care Accreditation system; the development of a Code of Ethics; and contracting of services to government agencies such as the School Council (e.g., preparation of discussion document on the first years of schooling) all reflect a willingness to respond to politically-driven challenges to long-established early childhood beliefs through constructive research and development activities, in preference to defensive reiteration of maxims about early childhood. In W.A., the Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation is beginning to perform a similar function in promoting research and development activities and as an advocate for children, parents and professionals. In New Zealand, the Combined Early Childhood Workers Union is emerging as an effective advocate for early childhood personnel; however, the absence of an independent organisation with a research and development focus, akin to that of the AECA or the Meerilinga Foundation in W.A., indicates an obvious area for development.

Finally, the Australian trend towards a competency-based approach to training has some parallels in the New Zealand system of early childhood qualifications which grants equivalency for prior learning. Systems of this type can create the danger of focusing on competencies at the expense of broader social and educational issues affecting early childhood. While New Zealand's integrated early childhood qualifications may avoid the problems of structural separation which have arisen in Australia, there is a similar problem of articulation between professional qualifications awarded by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, via its "grandparenting" procedures, and university qualifications which can further the career goals of early childhood personnel. This is an issue which needs to be addressed by professional and tertiary sectors in the interests of the growth of the early childhood profession in New Zealand. The early childhood profession in this country faces a unique challenge to develop a system of qualifications which acknowledges the strengths of community-based training for parents at the same time as providing for career mobility and the research and development needs of the profession.

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GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FIRST YEARS OF SCHOOL

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Introduction

It is appropriate that the focus for NZCER's seminar in the Year of Women's Suffrage is on early childhood education. There is a close association between early childhood and the role of women. The establishment of services has, in the main, been the result of a hard struggle by women (May, 1990). This focus on early childhood education is a signal to all those concerned with New Zealand's future that early childhood education will not be allowed to slide off the government's agenda.

There exists clear evidence of the positive effects of a number of early childhood programmes (Sylva & Moss, 1992). Our paper assumes there is general accord that early childhood care and education services, provided they are of high quality, can make an important contribution to young children's learning and lead to improved educational performance throughout schooling, well-being, and better social behaviour.

Characteristics of good-quality services were ably summarised in "Education to be More" as:

* appropriate staff:child ratios
* appropriate group size
* appropriate caregiver qualifications
* curriculum planning and implementation that is developmentally appropriate
* te reo Maori and tikanga Maori
* consistent care and education - that is, low staff turnover
* a partnership between the early childhood service and the parents or whanau
* a safe and healthy environment
* a close relationship with the community.

NZEI's Position

Education for under 5-year-olds is part of a continuum which links the home, non-statutory provisions and compulsory schooling. NZEI policy emphasises that early childhood education is an integral and vital part of the education system. The development and education of children is a

continuous process and good-quality early childhood services contribute significantly to the child's successful transition to, and readiness for, school.

In 1986 the administration of childcare services came under the Department of Education. The location of early childhood within the Ministry of Education does much to recognise that early childhood education is part of the education continuum and that care and education are inextricably intertwined.

New Zealand's concept of "education and care" as one, is the result of women at all levels of early childhood services campaigning for the recognition of that fundamental truth in the 1970s-80s. Those women staked out an ECE perspective within which families were recognised as having a crucial and central part. It was not an academic development although it was strongly supported by a handful of women academics.

What is the Role of the Government

NZEI sees the government's role in early childhood education:

* to fund ECE
* to guarantee universal access to quality ECE
* to ensure a high quality of ECE
* to establish adequate health and safety standards
* to enable national planning and co-ordination across the services.

This paper discusses financial provision for ECE, ensuring high quality, and the need for co-ordination across the services.

1 Financial Provision

Ironically the critical importance of the early years of a child's development is widely recognised in every way except by an appropriate level of funding, i.e., the direct salary funding for the early childhood service paid workforce; funding for the establishment of services; funding for the operation of services. There are just not enough affordable good quality services and the whole "before five" area suffers from chronic under-resourcing.

Early today Linda Mitchell of CECUA presented a potent reminder of the under-resourcing, poor pay and conditions and low levels of training for many workers in these services. NZCER's report on the initial impact of bulk funding on kindergartens shows the wide range of negative effects of the current government's agenda (Wylie, 1992).

On the whole, this government has placed profit ahead of children's fundamental interest. The impact of "new right economics" places obsessive faith in the efficacy of the "free" market, private enterprise and competition. The previous Labour government applied these economic views and the current government has extended them further.

NZEI policy states government should accept financial responsibility for early childhood education. We strongly maintain that state funding should go only to those services which are community owned and operated and not those which are run as private commercial enterprises. The government should be cutting back on support for private centres and schools. It is irresponsible to use state funds to subsidise private kindergartens and childcare. High quality early childhood services which at all times put the needs of children foremost are incompatible with private ownership and a business model where profit must be the prime consideration.

Increasingly the free market model and user pays approach to education will restrict family choices, and access to services will depend on ability to pay. This is a deplorable move away from universal provision and access as every child's right.

Maori people and Pacific Island people in New Zealand need support for their aspirations. Funding based on an amount per child does not take account of the needs of a child or the level of resources available to the centre. Educational resources are inadequate to support early childhood education for both Maori children and Pacific Island children.

2 Quality

Children in New Zealand come from a diverse range of backgrounds and are growing up in a variety of circumstances. In addition to the social and cultural changes, the world of work has changed substantially with the impact of technology and restructuring of the national economy. Changes to the structure and organisation of work and increasing female participation have meant new arrangements for the care of children prior to, as well as during, the years of formal schooling. (34% of women with children under 5 are in paid or part-time work).

Consequently, another change has been growth in the provision of both formal and informal childcare arrangements. NZEI maintains that regardless of which agency is responsible a broad perspective needs to be maintained. Private providers are motivated by profit-making. When private providers set up a new service they do not have to consider community needs or planning. However, there should be a process which recognises

and supports the integration of community-based services which may be privately owned but developed in response to a community need where previously there was no ECE provision.

The government must ensure that regulations provide adequate guidance to providers of different types of services over such matters as: acceptable levels of provision, accommodation, curriculum, staffing ratios, training, qualifications and appropriate remuneration and conditions of service for staff.

Currently, regulations are inadequate to support high quality early childhood education.

Curriculum

The government's role should set a framework which gives clear guidance on the organisation, planning and monitoring of the curriculum for ECE, and on the means of securing progression to the curriculum for older age groups.

ECE recognises that the whole range of experiences encountered by young children will contribute to each child's development and that careful planning of those experiences will enhance and benefit the child.

This means the curriculum must be appropriately designed. It must also recognise that high quality educational experiences require the provision of adequate resources. Teaching Maori children or Pacific Island children, or children who come from differing social backgrounds or cultures, needs more than simply adapting the curriculum.

Teachers and workers will then be able to develop a clear vision of their own curriculum policy and objectives and institute regular processes of monitoring and review.

Staffing Ratios

The quality of the child-teacher relationship remains a fundamental element associated with effective learning by young children.

Adequate ratios of staff to children and the identifiable benefits to the teaching and learning process has been well debated internationally and at considerable length (Glass, 1982; Mortimer et al, 1989; Project STAR, 1990, among others).

In New Zealand the evaluation of 1:20 (McDonald et al., 1987) showed that there are identifiable benefits to the teaching and learning process as a consequence of better staff:child ratios if other matters are also attended to.

Ministerial working parties (Roper report, 1987; Scott report, 1986; Curriculum Review, 1988) have all identified the issue of staff:child ratios as leading to more effective teaching and learning and recommended implementation as soon as possible.

Despite repeated attempts to reorder educational priorities, teachers in early childhood classes still struggle with inappropriate group sizes and ratios.

Qualifications and Training

Quality comes with trained staff, useful equipment and adequate space. Consideration must be given to reducing inconsistencies and fragmentation of training. The current modified requirement by NZQA of 80 points is a reduced requirement (from 120 points) which runs contrary to ensuring quality and consistency.

The quality of the staff in an early childhood centre is the most important influence on the quality of ECE (Feeny & Chun 1986). Staff training related to child development and education theory is strongly supported by research (Berk, 1985; Kaplan & Conn, 1984).

Moves to extend ECE training to 3 years along with concomitant changes to courses has seen the start of better co-ordinated and more common teacher training approach for those intending to work with children aged 0-8. The teacher registration process makes no distinction between training of kindergarten, primary, and secondary teachers. Whereas NZEI supports these moves, it maintains that preservice training programmes and modules for all teachers must reflect a more general approach to training and include significant emphasis on child development and learning as well as appropriate teaching strategies.

Primary and secondary teacher training has a lot to learn from early childhood practices. Because both primary and secondary training are established it is more likely that ECE is required to adapt, to fit the already established mould. This should not be. It would be helpful for all primary school teacher trainees to spend some time with children under 5.

3 Co-ordination Across the Services

An important element in the process of developing shared understandings is greater communication. Being fully aware of others' purposes, actions and methods is fundamental to establishing common ground and more co-operative practices. Most primary schools have already established links with their

local ECE centres through orientation visits and booklets for parents. But the quality of these links varies considerably from school to school. Schools and ECE have to find the resources and time for professionals to talk with each other.

Government moves to make contestable some of the professional services offered by ECDU will undermine the ability of the organisation to ensure high standards for early childhood workers.

In Summary

ECE has valued and responded constructively and practically to the initiatives of the community. However imperfectly, each movement has brought a greater understanding of ECE needs. Playcentre brought a commitment to high level parental involvement; Te Kohanga Reo showed explicitly that culture was a significant part of ECE.

"Education to be More" saw clearly identifiable areas of responsibility for ECE at family, community and government levels. Its authors saw the areas of responsibility as interrelated, and it was necessary for each level to carry out its responsibilities adequately or the system as a whole would not function well (Education to be More, p. 6).

Positive elements in ECE have been developed, on the whole, by passionate women who cared enough to organise and campaign for them. The amalgamation moves by the women and men in NZEI and CECUA are part of that renewed commitment to a new campaign for high professional standards, government funding, and community participation in early childhood services that meet the needs of New Zealand families. We all have a part to play.

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THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT IN PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN AOTEAROA

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> *The benefits of complementary early childhood care and education are proven without doubt by research and by experience. Parents know the difference it makes to their children and what a support it can be for themselves. Any principal or junior class teacher will comment on the difference early care and education experience makes to children's ability to learn.* Education to be More, 1988, p. 13)

This is one of the major reasons why Pacific Islanders set up Pacific Island Education Centres in New Zealand. It is the desire of Pacific Island parents that their children have equal opportunity to education like any other New Zealand child who attends kindergartens, childcares and playcentres thus giving the child a chance to socialise and experience all the early childhood educational activities before they attend Primary School.

Pacific Island people are blamed and labelled as having a high percentage of students who are failures in schools, the highest percentage of crimes, the highest number of unemployed. Some researchers or writers have the view that all these problems were due to lack of confidence because of the loss of the first language. Helen Bernstone (1992) has commented that Kerslake and Kerslake (1987) believed there was a developing lack of confidence in young people and it was because their education in New Zealand was in the English language. Competition developed and resulted in much stress in families. Already families were coping with poor school success rates, family members in prison, unemployment.

The philosophy of Pacific Island early childhood centres is for the child to learn and socialise in the child's first language. The name "language nests" was given to Pacific Island early childhood centres because of the fact that beliefs and values of any culture are preserved in the language.

We also remember the controversy between the Minister of Social Welfare and the Pacific Island community over the issue of "child abuse".

I will not argue and say that comments made by the media are

untrue or true, but I will question the government, and ask, "What have they done so far in response to these issues or difficulties? Is there a remedy to these failings in the schools? Is there a remedy to stop the increasing number of crimes? What about child abuse?"

What has the government done so far?

I will talk later about the role of the government but what I want to discuss first is the *response* and role the church has had in an effort to solve some of those issues, most prominently within the area of early childhood education.

The Role of the Church in Promoting Early Childhood Education

The most wonderful vision of Christ to me is the scene of him taking the little children in his arms. This same analogy is seen in Pacific Island churches today, in Aotearoa.

It is *the* most wonderful role of the church in New Zealand. The growth and the development of Pacific Island Early Childhood Centres in Aotearoa owe so much to them.

I strongly argue that without the church, many Pacific Island people, especially Samoans, the largest migrant population in New Zealand, would have had no access to early childhood education done in their own language and culture.

When I talk about the church, I do mean the *entire* church - ministers, their wives, church members and the church premises and facilities. The contribution made by the church is amazing.

Feaua'i Burgess (1990) has argued that at least two-thirds of the Pacific Island language nests are associated with a church and have church leaders actively involved with their operation.

The first Aoga Amata in New Zealand was founded by a minister's wife and was established at the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Newtown on the 5th of March 1985. This was one of the first licensed Pacific Island early childhood centres. It was blessed with the support of the whole congregation. Grandmothers and young mothers who did not work were all there to support the centre.

In 1986 the Aoga Amata in Porirua opened at the Congregational Christian Church, led by the minister's wife and aided and supported by church members.

This same pattern followed everywhere as Aoga Amata started to

spring up.

Other locations and denominations have included:

- the *PIPC (Pacific Island Presbyterian Church) Aoga Amata in Newtown,*
- the *St. Annes Aoga Amata in Newtown,*
- the *Aoga Amata in Lower Hutt,*
- the *Wainuiomata Aoga Amata,* established in a primary school building but run by the Minister and his wife with the support of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Wainuiomata,
- the *Punavai o le Ola Assembly of God in Berhampore,*
- the *Pomare Aoga Amata* is in a community hall but supervised by the wife of a minister and also has the support of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Petone,
- the *Aoga Amata in Strathmore* was established at Strathmore Primary school but still under the supervision of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa and the Aoga Amata in Newtown,
- the *Aoga Amata in Tawa* was also established in a church hall in Tawa, but last year shifted to Russell Primary School in Porirua, still however having the support of the CCCS and the Aoga Amata in Newtown,
- the *Palmerston North Aoga Amata* was established at the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Palmerston North and is under the supervision of the minister's wife,
- the *Leo o Samoa Aoga Amata in Elsdon* is also in a church hall and run by the catechist and his wife aided and supported by the Samoan Catholic Church in Elsdon,
- the *Leo o Samoa also is run at Windley School* and is supervised by the catechist's wife of the Samoan Catholic Church,
- the *Holy Family Aoga Amata* that opened at the beginning of last year is run by the wife of the catechist and three staff members who are graduates of the Aoga Amata Early Childhood Training Centre in Newtown,
- the *Aoga Amata in Naenae* is located in a primary school Hall and comes under the supervision of the catechist and his wife at the Samoan Catholic Church in Naenae,
- the *Methodist Aoga Amata in Petone* is run in a manse because there is no church hall and is supervised by the wife of a minister in the Samoan Methodist Church.

A new *Aoga Amata* was opened last week at the *PIPC church hall in Petone* and is also supervised by the minister and his wife and has the support of the whole congregation.

The *Aoga Amata in Dunedin* is also run under the Congregational Christian Church in Dunedin and is also supervised by the minister and his wife who recently died.

The *two Christchurch Aoga Amata* are also run by the Congregational Church of Samoa in New Zealand and are both supervised by ministers' wives.

In *Hamilton there is a Pacific Island early childhood centre* run by the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa.

In *Auckland about ten Aoga Amata* are under the leadership of church ministers and their wives. Some under the PIPC and Catholic denominations, but most are under the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in New Zealand.

The question is: Why are there so many Pacific Island early childhood centres run by the church for Pacific Island people most especially by the Samoan community?

My answer is, that the church cares and is concerned about the welfare of its people. Western Samoa's motto is: ***faavae i le Atua Samoa "Samoa is founded on God"***, an explicit statement of the relationship between church and nation (Pitt & Macpherson 1984).

When the government did not offer venues and facilities to operate early childhood education centres for Pacific Island people, the church stepped in and helped. To me, God reaches out through the church to help the Pacific Island people.

The church offered their halls. They offered the good leadership of their ministers and wives. They offered their care and concern for their church members. Ministers and wives worked voluntarily.

Church members using the Aoga Amata were mostly mothers and young women who come from families with very low incomes. In the centres they worked hard to get an allowance (if lucky) of $20 a week.

In these church halls the church paid for the lights, power and other expenses. The only money that the church received from the centre was a donation which the Pacific Island early childhood centre could afford.

But you can imagine that these church halls were built out of the money contributed by the local members of these congregations. Most of these members have an income of maybe $14,000 to $20,000 a year. And these poor people's incomes were also taxed by the government, which means these members are taxed twice. The donation they give to build the church halls used by the community for social purposes is to me another way of taxing people.

However, whatever unfair dealings came from the government, they were overlooked because of the great willingness of the church to provide the best for the Pacific Island children in New Zealand.

The Church Upholding the Holistic Nature of Early Childhood Care and Education

> *Three elements are at the heart of all early childhood care and education services: Features which are in the interests of the child - Features which are in the interests of the caregivers - Features which are in the interests of cultural survival and transmission to succeeding generations - that is, opportunities for young children to learn the language and other elements of their own culture in an appropriate setting, and for this learning opportunity to be available to the parents or whanau as well.* (**Education to be More, 1988, p. 6**)

The church has continually striven to uphold these essential elements of early childhood education.

They provide premises to suit the needs of Pacific Island children. They provide places where children socialise with their peers and assimilate the environment that surrounds them. The church also provides training so that Pacific Island women have the confidence to work with children in New Zealand society.

The Aoga Amata Training Centre is one such example, run under the auspices of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Newtown and initially established under an access scheme. It now runs three courses that are approved and accredited by the NZQA.

Tusi Pasi o Aoga Amata is worth 40 points towards licensing. *The Six Month Early Childhood Certificate* is worth 20 points, and *Tusi Pasi o Tusitala o Aoga Amata* is a story writing certificate.

All the above programmes are delivered in the Samoan language.

Since the centre opened in 1987 almost 300 Pacific Island mothers have been trained, with some going on to further training at the Wellington College of Education and NZCA. As a result of our training, a number of Aoga Amata Centres have sprung up in the Wellington area, all established by graduates of our programmes.

Without the church premises and members how would these Pacific Island women find any access to further education?

How would the Pacific Island Early Childhood centres have access to licensing without meeting minimum standards set out by the Ministry of Education?

I have mentioned and emphasised quite clearly the great contribution that the church has made to much Pacific Island early childhood education, but I am also aware of many Pacific Island early childhood centres (language nests) are not attached to churches.

The Aoga Amata Training Centre is specific only to Samoan and some Tokelauan women who speak and understand the Samoan language. But what about other ethnic groups? The NZCA training is there. But a person learns better when she/he learns in the language and culture that she/he is used to.

The PIECCA is currently writing a training package for all Pacific Island Early Childhood centres, with the intention that each Pacific Island group will learn in their own language. All these hopes will be implemented if the government is there to help financially.

There are centres operating in local primary schools, with rooms offered by Principals and teachers, or vacated community halls. Some of these centres are also attached to the church through the wife of a minister and church members. However, there is a great need of government's assistance financially.

Centres that are already licensed and receive bulk funding from the government try to give some assistance to these centres, as revenue from the ECDU is not enough to cover the cost of what is needed by the centres. For example, the Aoga Amata in Newtown, which is located and run by the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, supported both the Aoga Amata in Strathmore and the Aoga Amata in Tawa for some time until they were advised by some government agencies to form management committees for each centre, otherwise they receive no funding. Is this how the government threatens our people? This is an attitude of the government that infuriates me. The government should look after the welfare of its people, not to destroy the inspiration of the people.

My Perspective on Pacific Island Early Childhood Centres

Without the church, many Pacific Island children wouldn't have had any experience in early childhood activities. The church is doing the work that any government should do for its people.

The Pacific Island community establishes centres because they value the education and the future of their children. With

government assistance, the standard of Pacific Island early childhood centres would be higher.

The government, through the EDCU, approach these centres when they are about to start to give them advice. However, the minimum standards that the government offer as a passport to bulk funding is discriminative. Most of these centres are run in poorly conditioned rooms and will never reach minimum standards as required by the Ministry of Education, which will rule them out of bulk funding. The caregivers are trained and are qualified but the facilities are terrible. How can Pacific Island children develop and learn in such environments?

We look at the three essential elements to be present in every early childhood care centre, as stated by Anne Meade's report:

> *If any one of the three is championed at the expense of the other two, then the service will be unacceptably inadequate. Achieving the correct balance is crucial.*

I do not deny the fact that these three elements are either one or two missing from most Pacific Island early childhood centres. I do believe, the only remedy is the Government.

The Role of the Government

New Zealand is now a multicultural society. The Pacific Island community is one of the largest communities in New Zealand. If the government wants a better society for New Zealand in the future, it is about time that the government showed concern for the early childhood education of ***all*** its children.

> *The care and education received by and given to a young child is crucial to her or his development. Crucial, not just to the individual but to the society in which they grow and become adults.* **(David Lange; 1988).**

The church has done so much for Pacific Island early childhood education. However, even the church needs some support which the government alone can offer. Church halls are used for so many other purposes as well, which help meet the social, political and most especially the spiritual well-being of our people. There are buildings that the Ministry of Education are now selling to earn some money. Why not make these available for Pacific Island early childhood centres?

There are also Pacific Island centres that are not run by churches but under other organisations. I am sure that the support of the Government is greatly needed there also. The

minimum standard should be reshaped to suit the needs of low income people. If we put more care and resources into early childhood centres, we will save money on prisons in future.

I pay my tribute to the church, ministers and their wives, and all other church members. To all the wonderful Pacific Island people who offer their service for the benefit of our children. To the ECDU, the Manager and co-ordinators. To the Department of Early Childhood at the Wellington College of Education. To Helen Bernstone, and to Feaua'i Burgess the Pacific Island Tutor. To Betty Armstrong the ex-director of the Early Childhood Department. To the NZCA who gave further education to Pacific Island women.

To Dr Anne Meade who made a special contribution to education for early childhood. To everyone and all of you who have supported Pacific Island early childhood education. To the NZCER.

I pay tribute to the Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa and the Kohanga Reo people. You are our sisters and brothers and parents. We are Polynesians and you were sent here by our ancestors to look after New Zealand for all of us.

My highest tribute to God who strengthened the Pacific Island people in whatever difficulties they face.

Ia manuia tele i le faatasi mai o le Atua.

Fereni Ete
Director of Aoga Amata Training Centre

PROVISION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY

LET'S NOT UNDERVALUE CHILDREN

Rahera Barrett Douglas
Maori Women's Welfare League

Whakatauaki:

He aha te mea nui o te ao. Maku e ki he Tangata.
He aha te mea nui o te ao. Maku e ki he Tangata.
He aha te mea nui o te ao. Maku e ki he Tangata.

Since our establishment in 1951, the Maori Women's Welfare League (MWWL) has had an active interest in educational matters. In Early Childhood Education, this included many members involved in Playcentres, the Maori Education Foundation Preschool Project, Maori Families Education Association, and Te Kohanga Reo. We were profoundly influenced by a Canadian Indian proverbial saying (whakatauaki) which goes -

If you educate a boy you will educate a man,
If you educate a girl, you will educate a family.

Our interest in education is not just academic because we must try to ensure that the learning environments of our children and successors are under our control, thereby ensuring that we Maori influence how future generations of Maori will think and act. Further to that, we argue that until now the education system has failed and still fails our children. After all if the dissonance between Maori children and Kiwi schools is to be blamed on the children, then you are less than a step away from saying that our children are dumb, that they have lower Iqs and less ability than other children. We prefer to argue that the dissonance and failure occurs because Kiwi schools are not designed for our Maori children and the non-Maori professionals within that system fail to understand our children. Where learning institutions are designed by our people for our people, and emphasise intervention to improve the Maori child's life-chances, our children stay on in schools and they perform well. These are the schools which exhibit what Penetito referred to as *Maori education policies* rather than *education policies for Maori* which are sourced by officials and teachers at the top (Penetito, 1988, p. 98-102).

Kura Kaupapa Maori are the obvious example. You will no doubt have read recently that a half dozen form two pupils at Rakaumanga Kura Kaupapa Maori succeeded in passing the bursary examination in Maori, the first primary school pupils ever to

do so. Perhaps some of you would have shared our disquiet when Mr Tony Steele, chairman of the National caucus's education committee and former secondary school principal, said that there had to be something wrong with the standard of the bursary Maori exam if 12-year-olds can pass it, thereby detracting from these students' real achievements.

In general terms, our concern with the role of government in early childhood education is that it is based largely on false premises.

The League rejects the Treasury-led government view that families have the sole responsibility for rearing their children. This is a false assumption that families ought to be self-sufficient, capable of independently caring for their needs and those of their children, and in control of their personal futures. Present policy is not based on empirical investigation as to whether this is so or not.

Further, non-compulsory education policies (outside the age range 5-16) are based on the premise that education is predominantly a private good, (i.e., that the benefits of education accrue to the individual rather than to the wider society). While we applaud the recognition that parents ought to be encouraged to be less dependent on the state, and more autonomous, the consequences for current policies are continued loss of self-esteem, diminished family capacity to function and increasing numbers of impoverished and at-risk children (see Grubb and Lazerson 1988).

We argue that there are invaluable public benefits from education. New Zealand is better off with well educated citizens. Societies as well as families share the responsibility for children's well-being. Families are not self-sufficient, they do not independently meet their own needs, not even those with highest incomes. Many problems that confront families with children are beyond their control e.g., widespread and long-term unemployment and low incomes impact on educational aspirations, opportunity and participation. Societal support is needed to enable parents to rear their children. This is not confined to iwi or local community or private enterprise support; there is a clear role for government.

The League finds that the consequences of the view that education is predominantly a private good, is that government does not see a role for itself in promoting quality in education except by regulating for minimum standards. As an example - education before 5 years of age is non-compulsory i.e., it is voluntary. If you avail yourself of it, you will benefit; if you don't, only you will be disadvantaged. The

argument goes that because you are the prime beneficiary you should be the prime funder.

The lack of what the MWWL considers to be adequate support from government is a reflection of government's lack of understanding that families do not, and cannot, rear their children independently of an environment that supports their childrearing efforts. Supportive government involvement would be an acknowledgement of our collective responsibility for children. It would also signal a moral and social environment where commitment is made to protecting the interests of the weak and vulnerable.

What evidence is there to support this? A longitudinal study from Ypsilanti, Michigan found that just 1 or 2 years of preschool training led to major changes in the lives of the disadvantaged black youngsters when compared to a matched control group. High school graduation rates were 67% compared to 49% for the control group. Arrest rates were cut by 40% and the rate of teenage pregnancy was cut by almost a half (Berrulta-Clement, 1984, p. 2). You cannot tell me that there are not benefits to the community at large here. Indeed, benefits exceeded costs by seven to one, giving an average cost benefit of almost $29,000 per participant. Tax-payers saved $5,000 from special education programmes, $3,000 from crime costs, and $16,000 from welfare assistance, plus they gained $5,000 per participant in additional taxes (Weikart, 1987). These kind of verified benefits can readily be calculated for and applied to New Zealand. Moreover, preschool education may free parents of childcare responsibilities and thus make work (and therefore taxable productivity) more of an option (Ellwood, 1988, p. 221).

Both these competing perspectives on the value of preschool education are alive and well in New Zealand. Indeed, much of the debate in preschool education is centred on the ideological battle over which of these will prevail. In Scandinavia and many other OECD countries, recognition of the importance and value of quality early childhood education programmes has won out, and government provision to ensure that quality services are available is increasingly made universal, free and voluntary (Kammerman, 1988, p. 1).

Much of the material that I have read points to education being both a private and a public good. The longer one stays in education, the more likely one is of securing employment, not just any sort of employment, but interesting work which makes a contribution to the wider public-good. The higher the proportion of the population in work, then the higher their output and through both productivity and taxes, the higher their contribution to the common wealth. The more people

employed and earning their own living, the fewer who will require income-support from the state. If there is such a clear correlation between effective (non-compulsory) education and employment, then it is in the state's interest not just to promote education, but rather to promote quality education.

The MWWL position then is that while we do not deny that there are important private-good benefits from education, there are equally important public benefits. A well educated work-force is of greater benefit to the community at large than a poorly educated work-force. Maori education and employment figures are a case in point.

In the 1990 Household Labour Force Survey, 55% of the Tainui population aged 15 and over were without recognised paid employment. This was significantly higher than the equivalent Pakeha figure of 40%. Similarly the survey showed that 80% of Tainui people aged 15 and over had no school qualification. That is very high, both by national and international standards. Tainui rates of employment and unemployment are very similar to rates for other tribal groups, as are their educational attainment rates (see Ka Awatea, 1991, p. 29).

Besides setting and enforcing minimum standards in childcare, in terms of facilities, curriculum and teaching and caring processes, present government policy emphasises three areas of early childhood education, viz., early intervention, childcare and parent education. But the vexing question of equitable provision is not addressed.

Parent Education Programmes

These aim to provide information to improve parenting skills. They are based on twin premises, that parents are the child's first and most important teachers, and that there are critical periods in child development. In order to be most effective, the programme must focus on poor parents (i.e., poor both in terms of low income and also in terms of being inadequate). Programmes emphasise that parents need better education to be effective. Parent education is seen as a way to improve disadvantage at home and as a result to improve the child's cognitive functioning (Goffin, 1991, p. 20). Parent education programmes are seen as an alternative to childcare because they are cheaper, more effective in teaching young children and more respectful of the parent-child bond. They have the added factor that there may be a beneficial impact on siblings of the target child extending beyond the life of the programme (Goffin, 1991, p. 20).

However, the promoters of Parents as First Teachers and ECDU Parents Support Project argue that properly trained parents,

regardless of economic and social circumstances, can by themselves shape their child's future, thereby reflecting the underlying assumptions of those who argue for family individualism and self-sufficiency. Other underlying assumptions of parent education programmes do not encourage sensitivity to different styles of parenting. The ECDU Parents Support Project is trying to ensure that many Maori and Polynesian families are reached and supported in culturally appropriate ways. Even so, Parents as First Teachers and most other programmes assume that parents, especially poor parents, need training. Such programmes represent parents as deficient and parent educators as experts.

The League, as Maori women, recognise the danger of such representations, especially when target families have different cultures, values, beliefs, styles and ways of knowing and doing. Fortunately these premises are being challenged by recognition of cultural variation, and the significance and validity of the social, economic and cultural contexts in which target families are embedded. These contexts, which include neighbourhoods, hapu and iwi groupings, community, language and work differences, all influence parenting practices and need to be incorporated into parent education programmes. Parent education programmes need to move further towards the realisation that they should be parent supporting rather than parent changing.

Early Intervention

Early intervention programmes, such as Project Head Start, are more well known outside New Zealand than within. Head Start, which began almost 30 years ago in the U.S.A., focuses on educational intervention for children in poverty, aged 3 and 4 years. Interventionist strategies now operate in many other countries where they get government support because they are seen to have the potential to resolve the problem of poverty, by helping poor children to escape the poverty of their parents through enhancing their potential for success at school. Project Head Start and other early intervention programmes are based on the concept of a critical period - the first 5 years in the child's development (Goffin, 1990, p. 14).

We can consider the kohanga reo as the most important early intervention programme in New Zealand. In its pristine form it aims to take children from linguistically impoverished environments (monolingual English-speaking homes) and enrich them with total immersion in the target language (Maori). Furthermore, Maori language is used in a Maori cultural context. The aims of kohanga reo are similar to those of

early intervention programmes overseas in that they target their efforts on disadvantaged children (at least in terms of the target language) preparing them for success in public schools and beyond. In recent years, others have tried to piggy-back health and other social programmes on to kohanga reo. It is important to recognise that kohanga reo is not in the realm of special education, and that it is community rather than government orientated and managed.

Even though kohanga have been with us since 1982, no longitudinal studies have been reported. Anecdotal evidence suggests that ex-kohanga reo children who went on to empathetic schools are less likely than non-participant children to be held back in school or to be placed in special education or to be behaviour problems at home or at school. Ex-kohanga children are reported to be more likely to enjoy school, to have normal or higher reading ages, and otherwise to perform better than non-participants. Where primary school experiences are not so empathetic, early gains fade as quickly as their Maori language proficiency disappears.

But only a minority of eligible Maori children are involved in kohanga reo, funding needs to be provided not only to expand the programme's size, but also to assure programme quality. Many low income parents however need more than quality preschool programmes; many require full-day, full-year services which they cannot afford.

Childcare

If current labour market trends continue, the majority of New Zealand's school and preschool-aged children will have mothers in the work-force. As a result, safe health and appropriate childcare has become a necessity for families of all socio-economic levels.

Maori are not so well served. If Maori labour market trends continue, the majority of Maori children will live in poverty, i.e., households where the majority of adults are unemployed or under-employed (working less than 20 hours per week) and where per capita and household incomes fall within the bottom quartile. In the period 1986-91, the fastest growing household type were households with children headed by Maori women. In 1991, a quarter of all Maori children were in such households.

Parents need affordable childcare to enable them to work. Employers need workers who are reliable and productive because they feel secure about their childcare arrangements, and children need programmes that facilitate their growth (Goffin, 1991, p. 17). At least in this third area, the

development of curriculum guidelines has been important. Traditionally childcare was provided to enable mothers to work, not to promote child development. Within this context, childcare was custodial rather than educative because mothers, not their children, were the targeted consumer. Childcare in contrast to intervention programmes is seen primarily as a service to enable mothers to work outside the home.

Despite recent changes within the childcare industry itself, this orientation is still reflected in government policies which are directed towards minimising both costs and official support for quality services. All of us know that quality childcare is labour intensive and expensive. Whereas affluent parents can afford good childcare, overseas studies report that a majority of families are being forced to purchase inappropriate and unsafe care (Goffin, 1991, p. 18) and good quality is seen by many as the luxury issue in childcare (Phillips, 1987, p. ix). Policies which make childcare costs tax deductible really only benefit affluent families.

What Should Government Be Doing?

The MWWL believes that there should be more money and support from Government for early childhood education. The public-good aspects of ECE and indeed of education in general have been subordinated by ideologues not because their arguments are valid but because they save money and thereby fit into the Government's campaign to minimise Government and to retreat from responsibility for maintaining the common good and the common wealth.

In particular, the MWWL believes that Government should put more resources into early intervention (especially Maori and other community language programmes) and into childcare. A greater flow of resources from Government would give a clearer signal to the childcare industry, and others, that we as a society and community put greater emphasis on social equity. This is especially so where programmes and projects can demonstrate greater equity of outcomes for children and their mothers. Children who are born into and live in poverty, and mothers who wish to enjoy their civil and human rights to participate fully in the community through waged labour, need responsible, affordable, accessible and high quality childcare.

Raising the overall standard of childcare will be very difficult indeed if Governments continue to view it as a social service to enable women to work rather than as a service to children who are the real clients.

I propose therefore that Government reverse its retreat from

provision, and set up quality preschool education and care centres similar to the Lady Gowrie Centres (LGC) found in each capital city in Australia. Those of you familiar with the Australian Early Childhood Association and the LGCs will know that they act as magnet centres. They offer high quality care and education, they are closely associated with preservice and inservice training, and with research into a wide range of issues in ECE.

In New Zealand, similar centres should be established perhaps associated with those colleges of education with early childhood education training programmes. Were this done, they would be viewed similarly to "normal schools" i.e., institutions involved directly in the practical training of teachers and caregivers. Within the New Zealand social and cultural context, our version of LGCs would encompass all aspects of ECE, with each centre having perhaps a nursery, a creche and day-care centre, a kindergarten, and parent-managed programmes encompassing playcentre, kohanga reo and in some of them at least, Pacific Island language nests.

New Zealand's version of the LGCs would need to be strategically placed and adequately funded to enable them to demonstrate how affordable, accessible, accountable and quality preschool education and care should be provided. They would act as centres of excellence in ECE, whereby various sections of the ECE industry would get inspiration, and because they would provide a research-based programme, innovation based on New Zealand's needs would lead to improvement in early childhood provision and service.

A Final Word

There are a number of complementary lines of argument for greater Government involvement in quality early childhood education. Myers (1990, p. 36-37), in promoting greater state investment in early childhood development in third world countries, lists them as follows:

> **human rights** - children have a right to live and to develop to their full potential,
> **moral and social values** - through children humanity transmits its values, that transmission begins with infants. To preserve desirable moral and social values in the future, one must begin with children,
> **economics** - society can benefit economically from investing in child development through increased production and cost savings,
> **programme efficacy** - the efficacy of other programmes (e.g., health, nutrition, education, women's programmes) can be improved through their combination with programmes

of child development,
social equity - by providing a fair start it is possible to modify distressing socioeconomic and gender-related inequalities,
political strategy - children provide a rallying point for social and political actions that build consensus and solidarity,
scientific evidence - research findings demonstrate forcefully that the early years are critical in the development of intelligence personality and social behaviour and that there are long-term effects associated with a variety of early intervention programmes,
changing social and demographic circumstances - the increased survival of vulnerable children, changing family structures, country-to-city migration, women in the paid labour force and other changes require increased attention to early care and development.

Each argument stands on its own, but when combined they are particularly compelling. While different lines of argument will be more apparent to our own situation than others, all eight have some relevance. But it is a truism that,

> It makes no sense to cite evidence about the educational benefits of exemplary, high quality programs, and then enact programs with low expenditures, low ratios, low salaries and inadequate teacher preparation.
> (Grubb, 1987, p. 42).

> Financing of early childhood programmes is not the basic problem. The problem is to recognise the value of such programmes and build the personal and political resolve necessary to carry them out.
> (Myers, 1990, p. 46).

If we can promote the idea of LGCs in New Zealand, it has to be achieved by a partnership between the ECE sector and Government. In Australia, the ECE sector has come together to form the Australian Early Childhood Association. Membership comprises all significant players in ECE. We would need to demonstrate the same degree of unity in our sector for the concept to work properly here.

Te Roopu Wahine Maori Toko i te Ora,
Wellington, 23 February 1993.

LETTER TO THE MINISTER

The participants recommended that the seminar organisers should send a letter to the Minister of Education, outlining the main issues raised during the plenary session. Accordingly, the following letter was sent. The Minister's reply is also included.

8 March 1993

Dr the Hon. Lockwood Smith
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Dr Lockwood Smith

I am writing again, this time on behalf of the seminar participants, to thank you for ensuring that a copy of your paper was made available for our seminar **What is Government's Role in Early Childhood Education?** We are sorry that the weather kept you from attending what was a stimulating seminar, and a celebration of the strengths of early childhood education, such as its diversity, appropriateness for different groups, its substantial voluntary component, and the exciting new developments in curriculum. The participants were pleased to have these strengths recognised in your paper.

They were also pleased that you acknowledged that, although Government's contribution to early childhood education has been growing, it is still a very small part of the education budget, despite the crucial importance of children's experiences in the early years being recognised universally.

There were a number of issues which the participants at the seminar would have raised with you had you been able to attend, and a number of major themes which emerged during the day. We have been asked to convey these to you.

1. Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines

The seminar participants enthusiastically supported the draft guidelines, which they want to become available to early childhood educators in centres and homes as soon as possible. They agree with you on the value of the consultative process which helped produce them, and would expect further

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language nests.

Problems were noted with the use of the social welfare subsidy as an increasingly important method of funding early childhood services: it results in escalating costs to Government, and yet it still does not guarantee affordability. This affects access. Moreover, this mechanism does nothing to improve quality so that children benefit from early childhood care and education.

Direct funding to services, with incentives to ensure good quality or improvements towards good quality, was seen as a more successful means of ensuring the availability of good quality early childhood education.

The special arrangements for Te Kohanga Reo were appreciated. It was thought that provision of early childhood services would improve if funding for other services, such as Pacific Island language groups, were not based on uniform criteria which do not take account of differences in existing resources.

4. Parents as First Teachers

The seminar participants expressed their pleasure in the news that the Parents as First Teachers policy will be adapted to New Zealand conditions, rather than applied as it was in the United States. They would be grateful if you could clarify the reference to this policy as the "initial level" of Government support for early childhood. Participants assumed Government remains committed to supporting early childhood education in centres outside the home, such as family day care, childcare centres, playcentres, and nga kohanga reo, which also educate infants and toddlers.

5. Partnership

The seminar participants felt that the framework for successful early childhood education policy rested on the integration of funding policy, curriculum, training and continued development, monitoring of quality, and enforcement if needed. The **Before Five** framework provided one way to weave these strands together so each supported the other, rather than heading in a separate direction. There was a general feeling amongst the participants that early childhood policy was beginning to fragment, to the detriment of the sector, with less effective use of Government money.

consultation if you seek to make any substantive changes to the guidelines.

2. Quality of Early Childhood Services

There is growing con[illegible] that the quality of New Zealand's early childhood education may deteriorate, as pressure on budgets grows, qualification requirements are reduced, and uncertainty over roll numbers and funding makes it more difficult to plan, implement, and evaluate appropriate programmes for the children.

The **Before Five** framework included a number of in-built incentives for services to improve their quality, in ways supported by substantial evidence from overseas and local research. Unfortunately, these incentives are now being cut back, dropped, or are becoming unclear in meaning (for example, the arbitrary figure of points for early childhood training needed for charters has no direct relationship with any recognised qualification).

The point was made in several papers that access to early childhood education is insufficient in itself because poor quality early childhood education can have a negative impact on children and their families, regardless of their family circumstances.

Concerns were also raised in this respect about the impact of the tight economic climate on many families, particularly where women are the main income earners. Examples were described which are of particular concern in Maori communities. Early childhood education is now slipping beyond the financial reach of such families, and examples were given of gaps in the social welfare childcare subsidy that particularly affect such groups.

Participants expressed concern that, although the Education Review Office is monitoring compliance with legislation and charter or licence requirements, there is no secure means of guaranteeing quality for parents as the Review Office has neither mandate to make unannounced visits nor funding to visit often enough.

3. Funding of Early Childhood Services

The expectation in the early childhood sector was that funding for the diverse services would become more equitable by improving funding levels to that of the best funded. Instead, the opposite is occurring, with downward shifts for some who were previously better funded than other services, and no real improvement for the most recently developed, Pacific Island

You noted in your speech that early childhood educators did not take to the streets or the media to reach Government. They asked the seminar organisers to communicate to you that there is a strong desire in the sector for two-way discussions. This seminar was seen by those who attended as a now rare chance to have some useful discussion with the Minister. They appreciated your willingness to participate and were sorry that the weather prevented this. They would welcome further opportunities, and improved two-way consultation with you on policy matters.

If you or your Associate Ministers wish to respond to these points raised by the seminar participants, or to discuss with us any of the issues raised here, we would be pleased to hear from you and to include your comments in the forthcoming proceedings of the day. We would need your written response for the proceedings by 22 March.

Yours sincerely

Valerie N. Podmore (Dr)
Seminar Co-ordinator

Office of
THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
Wellington. New Zealand

23 April 1993

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WELLINGTON

Dear Dr Podmore

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 1993 regarding my paper to the recent seminar, 'What is Government's Role in Early Childhood Education?'. My replies to the points you raised are outlined below.

1. Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines

I appreciate your positive comments about the Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines. Comprehensive editing is taking place at present and plans to distribute the draft document in mid-1993 are proceeding to timelines established. The draft guidelines will be sent to all early childhood centres, individuals, groups, and institutions, together with an evaluation questionnaire. Any substantive changes would be made only in light of the feedback from this consultation.

2./3. Quality and Funding of Early Childhood Services

I share your views on the importance of quality in early childhood education. In response to your comments on funding I would point out that since taking office it has been essential for this Government to retain tight control of Government spending. While there was a decrease in the universal rate for under two year old children in the 1991 Budget, funding levels since then have been maintained. The Government has continued to fund growth in this sector and therefore funding to the sector as a whole has continued to increase.

The Government remains committed to its objective of making it possible for all groups to have access to affordable early childhood education. There has also been a significant increase in uptake for the Department of Social Welfare Childcare Subsidy.

Pacific Island Language Groups have been provided with $1 million during this financial year to assist them to reach licensing standards and become eligible for funding at the higher rate. Most of this money has now been allocated to specific groups, to assist with the necessary work to achieve this end.

You refer to the effectiveness of the Department of Social Welfare Childcare Subsidy as a means of delivering funding. The Ministry of Education is to conduct a review of early childhood education funding this year. The effectiveness of the Department of Social Welfare Subsidy will be addressed in the context of this wider review.

The Ministry has commissioned research into the early childhood sector to help it develop long term plans for the funding of early childhood services. This research will assess the impact of fee levels for both users and non-users of early childhood services. The research is also expected to provide information which will assist the Government to find a more effective way to fund the diverse range of early childhood services.

While there were some changes to the funding and a relaxation of some of the licensing requirements as announced in the 1991 Budget, I do not see this as a fragmentation of the overall framework for the early childhood education in this country, nor do I see the adjustments that have been made in the regulations as compromising quality. The changes have been an attempt to address some of the tensions which arise between Government quality requirements, funding and the viability and affordability of services. This Government remains committed to a coherent sector-wide approach to early childhood policy to ensure the provision of quality early childhood education that is affordable and accessible to all.

You make reference to Review Office visits which I would like to comment on. There is in fact legislative provision for Review Officers and officers of the Ministry of Education and Department of Health to make unannounced visits to early childhood services, although I understand this usually happens only when there are specific concerns.

4. Parents as First Teachers

Parents as First Teachers is the current major early childhood education initiative by the Government as an additional service to provide support to parents at a vulnerable time in their lives. Parents may also use the existing early childhood education services as they choose to, which will continue to expand according to demand.

5. Partnership

I too, am aware of the value of two-way discussions and was sorry I was unable to attend the Seminar for this reason. However, the Early Childhood Advisory Committee representing early childhood national organisations, meets regularly with the Secretary for Education at the Ministry of Education. Concerns such as those you noted are then passed on to the Associate Minister of Education, Hon John Luxton, through this channel. I know too that he is always happy to hear from people with concerns about early childhood education matters.

I appreciate hearing the views of the people who attended the Seminar and I hope you will be able to pass my comments back to them.

Yours sincerely

Lockwood Smith PhD
Minister of Education